

Lessons on the Church of Christ

By

W. C. Graves

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P.O. Box 72
Winona, MS 38967

Phone: 662-283-1192

Fax: 662-283-1191

E-Mail: choate@worldevangelism.org

Publisher's Statement

Some time ago while visiting our good friends, Curtis and Ruth Duke, in Columbus, Georgia, U.S.A., brother Duke allowed me to browse through his library. I noticed, in particular, one old volume entitled **Lessons on the Church of Christ**, written by W. C. Graves. Though the book has long been out of print and the author is no longer living, the truths presented are still applicable to the needs of our own day. I asked brother Duke if I could take it along with the idea of reprinting it. He graciously agreed, and this book is the result of that visit.

Here in India we are always looking for scriptural materials to print. Often the new books being printed contain similar subject material as we have printed before. However, they are written by different authors, with each one having his own way of teaching those principles. This serves as a reinforcement of the truths of the Bible and shows that there are many who believe, teach, and practice the same thing. It also shows that you, too, can obey the Lord, be saved, be added to the Lord's church, and live the Christian life so that you may have the hope of eternal life.

Please read this book carefully, comparing the things written with what the Bible teaches. We believe that you will be greatly benefited by your study. This is our prayer for you and for all others who may read these lessons.

J. C. Choate
Church of Christ
Box 3815
New Delhi 110049

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Lesson 1

Importance of Bible Study

1. The Importance of Bible Study:

The importance of studying the Bible cannot be over-estimated. Just to read the Bible occasionally is not enough. Daily Bible reading in the home and in Bible classes conducted by competent teachers is a sure way to learn the things that are in the grand old Book. In every congregation you will find a few who avail themselves of such opportunities to learn God's will.

If Christians would spend one tenth as much time reading and studying the Bible as they do in reading newspapers, magazines, etc., we would have a Bible-informed membership. Too many are trying to go through this world with as little knowledge of God's word as possible. In this lesson we are giving a number of Bible reasons why the Christian should study the Bible. It is our prayer that you will be encouraged to read and study your Bible more.

2. The Bible was written for our learning:

Remember, God did not write the Bible for His own good, but for ours. There are things that God wants us to know. That is why we have the Bible. Paul says, "*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*" (Romans 15:4).

When Paul says, the things that "*were written before*", he means the things in the Old Testament. Hence, the whole Bible

is to be read. True, we are not under Old Testament Law, but the New. But there are things in the New Testament that can't be understood without some knowledge of the Old Testament. For instance, in John 6:45 reference is made to Jeremiah 31:31-34. So with many other passages in the New Testament. (Right here we suggest that you get a good **reference** and **concordance** Bible.) When the New Testament writers refer to the Old Testament, you can look it up and read it. With some understanding of the Old Testament many things in the New Testament are made plain. And remember, since God wrote the Bible for our learning, let us be sure that we try to learn the things that are in it.

3. We are made free by knowing the truth:

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32).

Just think of the many who are in darkness today because they do not know the truth! Just think of how it would be if Christians were cold, careless, lukewarm, indifferent, and did little in their congregations because they knew little about the truth of God and made no effort to learn. That would be a poor commentary on the church member who claimed that God was his Savior, yet seldom read his Bible.

The "truth makes free" in that it enlightens the soul, revealing what is right and what is wrong. If you are not a diligent reader of your Bible, it shows that you are not interested in knowing the truth. *"Awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14).* Read and study God's word and learn the truth of God on the "way of salvation".

4. It is not in man to direct his steps:

"O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon says, *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12). In view of these statements, what is one to do? We answer: Let God direct your steps. But how? We answer: By the Bible. Man is too weak, too frail to map out his own course. Man's own way, says Solomon, leads to death, to destruction. Go to your Bible and let God direct you, and your life will be filled with happiness.

5. Ignorance will condemn us:

Ignorance of God's word when we have the opportunity to know it will certainly condemn us. Look what ignorance of God's word on the part of the Jews did to Christ. They put Him to death! Yes, Jesus on the cross said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"* (Luke 23:34).

If the Jews had studied the Scripture as they should have, they would have been able to identify the Savior when He came. This calls to our mind Hosea 4:6, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."* *"Destroyed for lack of knowledge!"* Think of it. Yes, many at the judgment will be destroyed for "lack of knowledge." Many, we fear, will be church members. They could have had knowledge, but just didn't care. They didn't have time to read the Bible! No, that is not it. They had time to read other things, but just weren't interested in the Bible. Is that true in your case?

6. False teachers are abroad in the land:

Hear John: *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). How are we to try the spirits? We answer: By the word of God. If what one preaches or teaches is supported by the word of God, we know that person to be a true preacher or teacher. Otherwise, he is not. For instance, if a preacher or teacher says that one church is as good as another, or that one does not have to be a member of the church to be saved, or that sprinkling, pouring, and immersion, are all acceptable forms of baptism, or that one does not have to be baptized to be saved, we know that they are false preachers and teachers. Such preaching and teaching contradicts the plain word of God. But if you don't know what the Bible teaches, how can you discern between truth and error? That is why you should read and study your Bible!

7. Much of man's worship is vain worship:

"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

That is what our Lord said, so it must be true. Do you know true worship from vain worship? If you should attend a church service and the people were singing by the accompaniment of a piano or organ or other mechanical instruments of music, would you know that such worship was vain worship? You would if you know your Bible and believe it. Vain worship then is adding to or taking away from the word of God, or substituting the inventions of men. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, *"Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."*

It is difficult to get people to see that all worship is not true worship. People think, "Any way will do just so you are honest." How can one be "honest" if they will not investigate and be governed by God's word? Paul was honest when persecuting Christians, but he kept his heart right, and when he found that he was wrong, he changed. That is honesty in religion. Nothing else is.

8. The Word of God is our soul food:

"But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

The Christian can no more grow spiritually without the word of God than the babe of this world can grow physically without material food. But many who claim to be Christians seldom look into their Bibles. They are dwarfs, spiritually. They are dying spiritually because the soul is not getting enough food. Whoever you are, reading these lessons, whether brother, sister, or sinner, we hope and pray that you will read your Bible, attend Bible classes and try to learn as much about God's word as possible. May the lessons that follow enlighten your soul and make you a better man or woman, boy or girl.

Texts used:

Romans 15:4; John 6:45; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 8:31; Ephesians 5:14; Luke 23:34; Hosea 4:6; 1 John 4:1; Matthew 15:9; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Acts 26:9-11; Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2; Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12.

Lesson 2

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

1. The importance of rightly dividing the Word of Truth:

Perhaps there is no subject that means more to the truth seeker than that of "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" or as the Revised Version puts it, "*Handling aright the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

With a clear understanding of this subject one can appreciate the beauty and simplicity of God's word and can have a clear understanding of the gospel plan of salvation. Very likely one of the principal causes of so much error and confusion among religious people is because very few know how to "*rightly divide the word of truth*." People mix the Old Testament with the New Testament, the law of Moses with the law of Christ. What the sinner is to do to be saved is transferred to the Christian, and what the erring Christian is to do is transferred to the sinner. So many people seem to have no clear understanding of what it means to "handle aright the word of truth". It is our desire and purpose in this lesson to help the reader to better understand this important subject.

2. The Bible is the Word of Truth:

This does not mean that God approves of everything that people did in the Bible, for there is much lying, stealing, fornication, adultery, and perversion of all of God's commandments.

But God inspired the writing of these things for our instruction. Paul says, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). This teaches the purpose of the Scriptures. But the Scriptures must be "rightly divided", "handled aright", which means that we must make the right application of the Scriptures. It is an easy thing to pervert the Scriptures, make the wrong application of them, and when this is done, error is taught, and souls are lost. We must all be careful in handling the Word of God.

3. Not everything in the Bible is applicable to man today:

Because the Bible is the "word of truth" does not mean that everything in it is applicable today; that is, not everything in the Bible is to be practiced. For instance, God commanded Noah to build an ark (Genesis 6); He commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, upon the altar for a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2); He commanded Moses to speak to the rock (Numbers 20:8); He commanded the children of Israel to keep the Sabbath (Exodus 20); He commanded Saul, the first king of Israel, to slay the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15); He commanded Naaman, the Syrian, to dip seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kings 5); Jesus commanded the blind man in John 9 to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

None of the above things are commanded of man today. A proper understanding of knowing how to "*rightly divide the word of truth*" tells us that none of these things are commanded of us. Yet, some preachers will say that it matters not where you open your Bible, you will find enough in any verse in any chapter to

save you. Surely such preachers and teachers are not by any means safe teachers of God's word. One having no more conception of God's word than that should not be in the pulpit.

4. We are not under the Old Testament Law but the New Testament:

To "*rightly divide the Word of Truth*", one must understand that we are not under the Old Testament (or "covenant" or "will") and its laws, but rather we are under the New Testament and its teachings. Unless this division of the "word of truth" is recognized and adhered to, one will not get anywhere in the study of the Bible. In Hebrews 9:15 it is plainly declared that Christ is the "*mediator of the new covenant.*" Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:6, states that he and the other apostles are "*ministers of the new covenant.*" Therefore, the New Testament of which Christ is the mediator contains the plan of salvation from sin.

Many insist in running back to the Old Testament for their authority to observe the Sabbath, to use instrumental music in worship, to burn incense, to have more than one living wife or husband, and many other things that belong to the Old Testament. They seem to think that just because a thing is in the Bible, it is all right to preach and practice it today. No, the "Word of Truth" must be "handled aright". The right application must be made, or else we are lost. Let preachers and teachers take warning.

5. The Old Testament Law was done away with by Christ:

In 2 Corinthians 3:14 Paul speaks of the Old Testament being done away in Christ. Here are his words: "*But their* (the Jews)

minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ." Adventist and all denominations would do well to read and believe this text, and stop going to the Old Testament for their authority for the many things they practice. Paul says the Old Testament is done away in Christ, which means that the Old Testament is no longer our rule of faith and practice. We live under the New Testament of which Christ is the mediator. *"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17).

6. The cross is the dividing line between the Old and New Testament:

On the cross, Jesus said, *"it is finished"* (John 19:30). Christ had come to earth and lived in His life the teaching of the Old Testament, and thus fulfilled its demands, something no other being had been able to do. And that is why He said in Matthew 5:17,18, *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."* It was fulfilled in the life of Christ and passed away at His death. Hence, Paul in Romans 10:4 says, *"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*

We now have the New Testament, of which Christ is the mediator. Let us look to the New Testament, the gospel of Christ, for the plan of salvation, and not to the Old Testament or the law of Moses. And this distinction between the Old and New Testament, the cross of Christ, the dividing line, must be recognized in order to *"rightly divide the Word of Truth."*

7. The law of forgiveness for the alien sinner:

This law is explained in the commission that Christ gave to His disciples after His resurrection. In Matthew 28:18,19 Jesus said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* In Mark 16:15,16 He says, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned."* In Luke 24:46,47 He said, *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

Thus Christ commands faith, repentance, and baptism of the "alien sinner" in order to obtain remission of sins. With this knowledge of *"rightly dividing the Word of Truth"* people should stop going to the "thief on the cross" for an example of salvation without baptism. Jesus gave the commission after His resurrection and it does not matter how people were saved before His death — they must now look to the New Testament to be saved. The New Testament became operative on the first Pentecost after His resurrection. This is an example of what Paul means by *"rightly dividing the Word of Truth."*

Texts used:

2 Timothy 2:15; Genesis 6; Genesis 22:2; 20:8; Exodus 20; 1 Samuel 15; 2 Kings 5; John 9; Hebrews 9:15; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 3:14; John 19:30; Matthew 5:17,18; Romans 10:4; Romans 1:16; John 1:17; Matthew 28:18,19; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47.

Lesson 3

The Church – Called Out

The Church defined:

The word “church” is from the Greek word “*Ecclesia*”, meaning “called out”. But we are not dependent upon a knowledge of Greek to know that this is true. If the church is the “called out” we may expect the New Testament to teach that very thing; that is, to teach just what it is that those who compose the church have been **called out of** and just what it is that they have been **called into**. And, in fact, the New Testament does teach this very thing. The following Scriptures show just what those who constitute the church have been **called out of and into**:

1. The church is called out of the world into Christ:

Those who constitute the church have been called **out** of something **into** something, and that which they have been called out of is **the world**, and that which they have been called into is **Christ**. Jesus said of His disciples, *“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world”* (John 17:14).

Christ was not “of the world”. He kept Himself separated from the world. And His disciples are not “of the world” because He separated them from the world. This means that their interest was no longer worldly, but spiritual. All Christians need to understand this lesson. Where were you when Christ found you? In the world, of course, and lost. But Christ called you out of the

world unto Himself, and you should remember your holy calling. Worldliness and Christianity can't be mixed. And the Christian is admonished, "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2:15). Our Lord wants a church that is separated from the world. "*Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you*" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

2. The church is called out of darkness into light:

In Acts 26:18 Paul says that his mission was "*to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*" Such is the mission of both the church and the preacher today, tomorrow, and "*even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:20).

People are in spiritual darkness, lost, and nothing can save them but the gospel of Christ. The gospel "*is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes*" (Romans 1:16). Nothing else has that power. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to preach the gospel. "*To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*" (Ephesians 3:10). Thus, those in the church are called out of darkness into light.

Many "*loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*" (John 3:19). How is it with you, friend? Are you afraid to read your Bible for fear that you will find that what you are doing or holding to religiously is wrong? If you love light

rather than darkness, if you love the truth more than error, if you are really in earnest about going to heaven, you will not fear to investigate. Surely you want to correct your mistakes and whatever your evil way may be before you reach "Jordon's stormy banks" and your spirit is ushered into eternity. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled"* (Matthew 5:6). This is our Lord's promise. Will you accept it?

3. The church is called out of bondage into liberty:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

"Yoke of bondage" in this text means the Old Testament law, which none of the Jews kept perfectly. Yet, all who have not obeyed the gospel of Christ, both Jew and Gentile, are in bondage — in bondage to sin, slaves to sin. Hear Paul, *"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"* (Romans 6:16).

How is it with you, friend? Which do you love most, liberty or bondage? Not liberty to sin, but freedom from sin. Listen: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"* (Romans 8:1). Such is the liberty or freedom that Christ gives. We greatly fear that many a church member does not appreciate such freedom. All who are not in Christ and *"walking after the Spirit"* are condemned, in bondage. *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23), and many seem to like it.

4. The church is called out of the power of Satan unto God:

"To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

All who are not in the kingdom of Christ are under the power of Satan, doing service to him. And what an awful thing to be under Satan's power! Look at both Adam and Eve. They allowed Satan to influence them. They disobeyed God and were driven out of that beautiful garden. Yes, Satan seduced our fore-parents (Genesis 3:1-7) and brought death and destruction upon the human race. We should all turn from the devil and turn to God who, alone, can give lasting peace and happiness to the soul. *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).* Yes, if you are not in the kingdom of Christ, you are under the power of Satan. Thank God, those who are in the church and are faithful have been delivered from such a monster!

5. The church is called out of sin into righteousness:

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God's love for man! What a wonderful theme! *"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17,18).* *"Obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine"* freed us from the slavery of sin. To be a Christian, a servant of righteousness is the greatest happiness in this world.

Thus the New Testament clearly teaches that the church is the

“called out”, because the church is called (1) out of the world into Christ, (2) out of darkness into light, (3) out of bondage into liberty, (4) out of the power of Satan into God, and (5) out of sin into righteousness.

With this understanding of the word “church”, all should see that the church means something. The church then is that institution through which all must pass to be saved eternally. The church is the “called out”.

Texts Used:

John 17:16; 1 John 2:15; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Acts 26:18; Matthew 28:20; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 3:10; John 3:19; Matthew 5:6; Galatians 5:1; Romans 6:16; Romans 8:1; Romans 6:23; Genesis 1:3-7; Colossians 1:13; Romans 6:17,18.

Lesson 4

The Church – Called Together

We saw in lesson 3 that the word “church” means “called out”. But the church is not only “called out”, it is also “called together”. Every member of the church needs to learn this simple lesson about the church of Christ. Christians may be scattered, some here and some there, but God has ordained that they should “come together” at appointed times. To not do this is to disobey God and to endanger the soul. Let us be sure that we “come together” as God has ordained. Here are a few texts that teach that the church is “called together”.

1. **Hebrews 10:25:**

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Those who regularly forsake to assemble are in rebellion against God. They cannot claim the promises of God. If this is your condition, pray God for forgiveness, and start keeping His commandments. A Christian cannot absent himself from the assembly of the saints and die in the faith; for to die in the faith is to die keeping the faith. And this can’t be done if you are not faithful. *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10) is the way God’s book puts it. Just “once in awhile” is not the teaching of our Lord. What would become of the church of Christ if everyone decided to forsake the assembly?

2. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:33:

"Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another." This has reference to the church coming together to eat the Lord's supper. The church today, if it is to be the church of Christ, must also come together and for the same purpose that the church in New Testament times came together. They who are numbered with the "called out" must come together or else forfeit their inheritance.

Can a Christian excuse himself for being absent on the Lord's day because of some minor ailment that would not hinder him from going to work? He is simply deceiving himself. You can't mock God (Galatians 6:7). He knows all about you. "Company came in just as I was preparing to leave." Well, just invite company to come along with you, and if company won't go with you, then tell company to be seated, that you have an appointment with the Lord and you will be back later. Company won't come again at the hour of services. You are looking to God for your salvation, and not to company.

3. The purpose for which the church is to come together:

The church in New Testament times came together (1) for mutual edification, (2) to study the Scriptures, (3) to pray together, (4) to sing the praises of God, (5) to eat the Lord's supper, and (6) to give of their means to support the cause of Christ. Remember that when you fail to come together you disobey all these commandments. Observe the following texts:

*"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).
"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teach-*

ing and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). *"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come"* (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Here then is the purpose for which the church is to "come together", not for the purpose of entertaining and being entertained. So much of the worship today is nothing but entertainment, and there is no "Spirit and truth" in the worship (John 4:24). Let Christians be sure that they worship God "as it is written" (Matthew 4:4).

4. When is the church to come together?

The church may come together as often as it sees fit to do so. But the "first day of the week" is specifically mentioned as the day for the church to come together. *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). *"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper"* (1 Corinthians 16:2).

These texts show beyond a doubt that the church did come together on the first day of the week for a specific purpose, and that purpose was to worship. Regardless of how many times in a week the church may come together, here is the specific day and the specific purpose that the church *must come together*. Therefore it is not only a fact that the church is the "called out" but also a fact that the church is "called together".

5. What of those who do not come together?

Rest assured that if you claim to be a Christian and your

"coming together" is irregular, you are in rebellion against God. In the face of death you will be very uneasy about the welfare of your soul. Your irregularity in coming together shows a disrespect and lack of love for God, for Christ. We want to tell you these things now so you will be awakened to your true condition. "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some*" is God's admonition to you. Will you heed it?

Happy is the soul that is faithful in attending the Lord's day services. Such a soul is growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) and helping the congregation to be just the sort of congregation that God would have it to be. May God help you to be more faithful.

Texts Used:

Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 11:33; Galatians 6:7; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 16:2; John 4:24; Acts 20:7; 2 Peter 3:19.

Lesson 5

Use of the Word – Church

The word “church” is used in the New Testament in two senses as follows:

1. In a general sense:

In a general sense, the word “church” is used to include all the saved of the earth without reference to geographical location. It is easy to determine the sense of the word from the context in which it is used. The following texts use the word “church” in a general sense:

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church.”* Here our Lord is speaking of all the saved of the earth. No reference is made to a part of the saved at some particular place. Again in Colossians 1:18 we read, *“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”* Here again the word “church” is used in a general sense. Christ is the head of the church, wherever the church may be. *“For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). These and other texts speak of the church as including all the saved. Wherever a saved person is, that is the church.

2. In a local sense:

There are a number of texts in which the word “church” is used to speak of the saved at some particular place. This is what

is meant by local sense. The following texts use the word church in a local sense:

In 1 Corinthians 1:2 Paul says, "*To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*" A part of the church, some of the saved, were at Corinth, and Paul is here speaking of them. He calls them the "*church which is at Corinth.*" The church at Corinth contained all of God's people at Corinth, but not elsewhere, just as the church of God, or church of Christ here in this town, contains all of God's people here.

Other texts such as Philemon 2 and Revelation 2:1-29 speak of the church at a given place. Hence, the word "church" is used in the New Testament in two senses, (1) in a general sense, and (2) in a local sense. Keep this in mind in reading your New Testament and it will help you to better understand what is being said about the church.

3. Churches of Christ:

"*The churches of Christ salute you*" (Romans 16:16). This does not mean different kinds of religious institutions teaching different doctrines. "Churches" in the plural means congregations. In Paul's day there were many congregations of the "one body" (Ephesians 4:4). Hence, reference is made to the church at different places, such as the church at Corinth, Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Philadelphia, and many other places. The Lord established one church, or body (Ephesians 4:4), but there are many congregations of that "one body", or church. This is a simple lesson that is overlooked by many.

4. The word "church" is not used in the New Testament in a denominational sense:

When Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build My church*" (Matthew 16:16), He used the word "church" to include all the saved everywhere. But where is the denomination that claims to contain all the saved of the earth? Each denomination claims to contain just some of the saved. But the church of Christ contains all the saved. That is what the Lord says about it.

Denominations can't possibly be the church of Christ or any part of the church of Christ. In Paul's day the church was not chopped up into parties, each wearing a different name and teaching different doctrines. Some in the church at Corinth tried it, but Paul nipped it in the bud. He told them that Christ was not divided and His people should not be divided (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). Those in denominations should obey the gospel and be just a member of the church of Christ, the church that Christ built.

5. The invisible church:

Sometimes people are heard to say, "Well, just so you are a member of the invisible church — that's the thing." We answer, there is not so much as one letter that was written by Paul, Peter, James, John, or any inspired man to the invisible church. This talk about the invisible church is calculated to confuse the minds of the people and blind them to the simplicity of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such talk causes people to minimize the church and to esteem it of little importance. Speak of the church as the Bible speaks of it, and you will teach the people and save their souls. "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*" (1 Peter 4:11).

Texts Used:

Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philemon 2; Revelation 2:1-29; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 1 Peter 4:11.

Lesson 6

How the Church is Spoken Of

In this lesson we will notice some expressions found in the New Testament by which the church is called, or spoken of. Remember that Peter says, *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). The "oracles of God" are the utterances of God, what God has spoken. This means that we should speak of Bible things as the Bible speaks of them. When this is done, God gets the glory and not man. Hence, to speak of the church as the New Testament speaks of it is to speak as the "oracles of God".

1. Church of Christ:

Jesus said, *"Upon this rock I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18). Here our Lord calls the church "My" church; He himself doing the speaking, hence, church of Christ. Sometimes we hear people say, "my church", "your church", "their church". Again, people ask, "What is the doctrine of your church?" I always reply, "I haven't a church and if I did it would not have salvation in it." No one has a right to a church but Christ. He knows exactly how to run it and what to do with it. Furthermore, the church that Christ built is a blessing to the world. A church that was founded by some man is not. That is the big difference in the church founded by Christ and churches founded by man.

Other texts such as Acts 20:28 and Hebrews 12:23 speak of the church as the "church of the Lord", which is Christ, and the "church of the Firstborn", which is Christ. Denominations say

that it makes no difference what you call the church. But this is just to cover up and justify their human names. That it does make a difference is the reason why we have these Bible expressions of the church. Those who respect God will speak of divine things as the Bible speaks of them.

2. Church of God:

In 1 Corinthians 1:2 we read, "*Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth.*" Other texts such as 1 Corinthians 11:22 and 2 Corinthians 1:1 speak of the church as the "church of God". We make this point: If there had been a Mormon church, or Methodist church, or Baptist church at Corinth, the postman would not have delivered Paul's letter to such churches. He saw that it was addressed to the "church of God" and that is the church that he would have looked up. It does make a difference what you call the church.

One may ask, "What is the difference in the church of God and the church of Christ"? We answer — none. As the "church of God", God is the Father of it. As the "church of Christ", Christ built it and purchased it with His blood. In John 17:10 Jesus says, "*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.*" This means that what belongs to God, belongs to Christ. They are one in purpose and ownership. Hence, "church of Christ" and "church of God" are one and the same.

3. House of God:

In 1 Timothy 3:15 we read, "*But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" Here the church is spoken of as the fig-

ure of a building, and as such Christ is the foundation. *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 3:11). If you are in the church, you are in Christ, the foundation. If you are not in the church, you are not of Christ. It is so important that one be in the church in order to be in Christ, the foundation!

The Catholics are wrong in contending that Peter is the foundation upon which Christ built His church. Paul tells us exactly who the foundation is. He says it is Christ. Evidently God foreknew that this false doctrine concerning Peter being the foundation would be taught. That is why He has spoken so plainly on it.

4. The temple of God:

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16,17). As the temple of God in which God's Spirit dwells, Christians should keep themselves pure, else God's Spirit will not dwell in them.

Paul in Ephesians 2:21,22 makes it plain that Christians are *"being fitted together into a holy temple in the Lord."* In other words, God dwells on this earth, through the person of the Holy Spirit, in and through His people who are the church, or temple, of God. So for those in the church living a clean and faithful life, God is dwelling in and through them on this earth. What a glorious thought to know that God's habitation on this earth is in and through me!

5. The Sheepfold:

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16). This has reference to bringing in the Gentiles, which was done after Christ's resurrection.

After Christ was raised from the dead He commissioned His apostles to *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). *"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace"* (Ephesians 2:16). This could not be until after the death of Christ. Christ died for all (Hebrews 2:9). Hence, one fold or church, and one shepherd, Christ, and one door into the fold, or church, Christ. But denominations would have many folds or churches, and many doors into them. Just the very opposite of our Lord's teaching.

6. The Body of Christ:

"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22,23). *"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18).

As a body we see (1) Christ as its head, and (2) God's children as members of this body. *"Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually"* (1 Corinthians 12:27). And please remember that there is *"one body"* (1 Corinthians 12:20). Christ is not the head of a multitude of bodies. What would you think

if you saw a dozen bodies come walking down the street and only one head attached to those bodies! You say, "That's impossible!" Yes, and it is impossible for Christ, the head, to be attached to more than one spiritual body, or church.

7. The Kingdom of Heaven:

After Jesus had said, "*Upon this rock I will build My church*" (Matthew 16:18), He then added, "*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven*". Thus the institution that He calls "My church" He also calls the "kingdom of heaven". The church and kingdom then are one and the same, just as "church of God" and "church of Christ" are one and the same. If you are in the church, you are in the kingdom. If you are in the kingdom, you are in the church. God does not have some in the church and some in the kingdom. If so, we would have two institutions instead of one.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). The "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of His dear Son" are one and the same. Here we are told that we are in the kingdom. But verse 18 says, "*And He is the head of the body, the church.*" Just different expressions denoting different spiritual ideas of one and the same institution. The church is not a vestibule of the kingdom. God's word does not talk that way.

To sum up, we have the church spoken of as (1) the church of Christ, (2) the church of God, (3) the house of God, (4) the temple of God, (5) the sheepfold, (6) the body of Christ, and (7) the kingdom of heaven. May God bless you in learning these simple lessons about the church of Christ.

Texts Used:

1 Peter 4:11; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 12:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 2 Corinthians 1:1; John 17:10; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; Ephesians 2:21,22; John 10:16; Mark 16:15; Ephesians 2:16; Hebrews 2:9; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27; 1 Corinthians 12:29.

Lesson 7

Church and Kingdom the Same

1. Two words applied to the same institution.

Some take theological scissors and try to make a nice distinction between church and kingdom, like taking a razor and trying to split a hair. A pretty hard job! Now we know that the words "church" and "kingdom" have different meanings, but that does not mean that the two words can't be and are not applied to the same institution, for they are. We also know that the words "husband" and "father" have different meanings; yet the two words can and are applied to the same man. As husband, we mean that he is married. As father, we mean that he has children. Likewise, the word "church" means "called out", whereas the word kingdom is expressive of (1) a kingdom, (2) a king, (3) subjects, and (4) a law by which the subjects are governed. In the New Testament both of these words are applied to the same institution, each teaching a different lesson about one and the same institution. That's all. Observe the following:

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus says, "*On this rock I will build My church*", and then adds, "*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*" Did our Lord mean to teach that He was going to establish two different institutions? Of course not.

Some say that Jesus came to set up the kingdom, but being disappointed by the Jews, He turned aside and established the church as a sort of "contingency", whatever that may mean. Others say that the church is a sort of vestibule to the kingdom; that is, you go through the church into the kingdom. To say that

Christ did not do what He came to do is to impeach His divine wisdom. It is saying that our Lord did not know before He left heaven just how things would turn out down here! Such is nothing but rank error and false doctrine. Rest assured that our Lord did exactly what He came to do.

2. The kingdom is established.

Christ promised to give Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19) and the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ is when Peter first used the keys. Peter was the leading speaker on that occasion, preached the sermon, and announced the conditions of entrance into the kingdom. This is what is meant by "keys", simply preaching the gospel and telling people how to be saved or how to enter the kingdom of God.

This shows beyond a doubt that the kingdom was established on Pentecost. Read Acts 2 and you will see what was preached and what was done. *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them"* (Acts 2:41). *"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:47). The Lord said that He would build His church and that He would give Peter the keys of the kingdom. Here we find Peter using the keys, souls obeying the gospel, and the Lord adding them to His church. Church and kingdom then must be one and the same.

3. Paul used both words in speaking of the same institution:

"And He is head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). In verse 13 of the same

chapter he says, "*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*" Thus Paul in the same chapter speaks of the church and the kingdom. Those in the church are in the kingdom, and those in the kingdom are in the church. Not two different institutions, but one. And since He has "*conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*" we know that the kingdom is here. This shows that Christ did exactly what He came to do; that is, to set up His kingdom, to establish His church.

4. Born again — in the kingdom:

"*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5). This means that if the kingdom hasn't been set up, none have been "born again", and therefore none are saved to this very hour! Pretty bad, isn't it? All lost, none saved, if the kingdom hasn't yet been set up!

The kingdom has been established, for we have already shown that Paul speaks of those "*delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son.*" Most certainly one could not be in that which does not exist. Yes, church and kingdom are one and the same. The great Apostle Paul understood that. So if you have been "born of water and of the Spirit" you are a saved person and you are in the kingdom, the church.

5. The Lord's table in the kingdom:

By "Lord's table" is meant the Lord's supper. In Luke 22:29,30 Jesus said to His disciples, "*And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judg-*

ing the twelve tribes of Israel." Now Christians observe the Lord's supper every first day of the week. Where? In the church or in the kingdom? If the kingdom does not exist or if church and kingdom are not the same, in just which are Christians when observing the supper? A pretty hard question for some to answer.

In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul instructs the church at Corinth in the Lord's supper, tells them the manner in which they should observe it. But Jesus said that He would put His table in His kingdom. This shows beyond a doubt that both Jesus and Paul understood that church and kingdom are one and the same. And they are.

6. Some difficulties if church and kingdom are not the same:

If church and kingdom are not the same, just what is the difference? Some say, "The kingdom is larger than the church." Larger in what sense? In physical area or in numbers? If in physical area, then define the area of both, where both begin and end. If in numbers, then how determined? Is the law of entrance into both the same? If you answer, Yes, then we answer that one is no larger than the other. If you answer, No, then tell us the law of entrance into each. If the law of entrance into the kingdom is the law of entrance into the church, then wherever the kingdom is, the church is, and therefore one can't possibly be any larger than the other.

Let's stay with the plain teaching of God's word on this subject and see that when the Scriptures speak of the kingdom, you have the kingdom idea, and when the Scriptures speak of the church, you have the church idea, and that is all that you do have.

Texts Used:

Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:42-47; Colossians 1:13-18; John 3:5;
Luke 22:29,30; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

Lesson 8

Establishment of the Church, or Kingdom

Members of the church should be familiar with the Bible teaching on the establishment of the church, or kingdom. If one should ask you, "When was the church of Christ established?" you should be able to tell them the time and place and refer them to some of the Bible teachings on the subject. Since the church of Christ is a divine institution we may expect the Bible to tell us when and where it was established.

1. Isaiah foretold the establishment of the church:

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

The "last days" means the gospel age. "...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2).

The Lord's house means the church. *"But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Timothy 3:15). "On top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills" indicates its superiority to all other nations, kingdoms, and institutions of the earth. This is true of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no institution of man that is comparable to it in beauty, simplicity, and glory. Isaiah points to Jerusalem as the place of its establishment.

The second chapter of Acts is the fulfillment of this wonderful prophecy. There you will find that it was in Jerusalem and on the day of Pentecost that the first gospel sermon concerning the resurrected Christ was preached. *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them"* (Acts 2:41). Verse 47 says, *"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*

2. Daniel foretold the establishment of the kingdom:

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

"In the days of these kings" means the kings of the Roman empire. It is a New Testament fact that the Son of God was born and died during the existence of the Roman empire. It is also a fact that the Roman empire ceased as a universal empire some few hundred years after the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, at

some time between the prophecy of Daniel and the breaking up of the Roman empire, the *"God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."*

The kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Christ said that He would give Peter the "keys of the kingdom", and Peter used the keys for the first time on Pentecost. Furthermore, the Hebrew letter was written about forty years after the resurrection of Christ, and the writer of that epistle declares in Hebrews 12:28 that, *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* This shows beyond a doubt that the kingdom was set up. Daniel said that it would be set up, and the Hebrew writer says that it was set up. Those looking for Daniel 2:44 to yet be fulfilled are looking in vain. It was fulfilled two thousand years ago.

3. John preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand:

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1,2). Here John is simply announcing the approaching kingdom that Daniel had foretold. Jesus preached the same thing about the kingdom, as did the apostles, during His personal ministry (Mark 1:14,15; Matthew 10:1-7). After Pentecost such preaching as "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" ceased. Which means that the kingdom was set up.

4. The kingdom was to come during the life-time of the apostles:

"And He said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that there are

some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power" (Mark 9:1). Christ said this to His apostles; hence, during their lifetime the kingdom would be set up. All of the apostles lived to see the kingdom come except Judas, who hanged himself (Matthew 26:4). How then can one claiming to be a preacher say that Daniel 2:44 has not yet been fulfilled. It appears to us that such a denial is nothing short of straight-out infidelity.

5. Christ promised to build His church:

Jesus said to His disciples, *"Upon this rock I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18). "I will build" is future tense. Hence, Christ had not built His church at the time of this text. Those who claim the church was set up by John are ahead of time. It was sometime after John was beheaded that Jesus said, *"I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18). Christ must first die, be buried, and raised from the dead before He could build His church (Matthew 16:21). The church is purchased with His blood. *"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28). The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was preached on Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. On this day His promise was fulfilled, that He would build His church. Acts 2:47 says, *"Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*

6. The Church was spoken of as "here" after Pentecost:

Before Pentecost the church was spoken of as something that

was to be established, that is, in the future. Such was the language of Christ, *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matthew 16:18). But after Pentecost the church is always spoken of as being here, and having souls in it. *"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:47). *"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers"* (Acts 13:1). *"To the church of God which is at Corinth..."* (1 Corinthians 1:2). These texts show that the church did exist after Pentecost. Hence, Pentecost was the birthday of the church of Christ.

7. The Kingdom was spoken of as "here" after Pentecost:

Before Pentecost the preaching was, *"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:1,2). After Pentecost the preaching was, *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"* (Colossians 1:13). In A.D. 96, about 63 years after Pentecost, John, who wrote the book of Revelation, says, *"I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"* (Revelation 1:9). Here John declares that he, along with others, were in the kingdom. So as the church was set up on Pentecost, so was the kingdom. Church and kingdom are the same.

Space forbids us to say more on this important subject. Friend, are you a member of the church of Christ, the church that you can read about in the New Testament? This church of which you can put your finger on the time, the day, and place of its establishment? Don't risk your soul in some church that was not founded in New Testament times.

Texts Used:

Isaiah 2:2-4; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:15; Acts 2; Daniel 2:44; Hebrews 12:28; Matthew 3:1,2; Mark 1:14,15; Matthew 10:1-7; Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Acts 2:47; Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9.

Lesson 9

How to Become Members of the Church

This is a very important study of the church of Christ. Every member should have a clear understanding of just what the church is, the kind of material out of which the church is composed. Just anything does not go into the making of the church of Christ. Our Lord must order the material, else it cannot be the church of Christ. The following Scriptures clearly teach the nature of the material that goes into the church of Christ.

1. Teaching:

To become a member of the church of Christ, one must first be taught. Our Lord in John 6:44,45 said, *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught by God. Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."*

In connection with the above Scripture, Jesus, after His resurrection, said to His disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"* (Matthew 28:19). Hence, teaching is the first thing needed in order to prepare the material out of which the church of Christ is built. The great work of the church is to teach people, because they can't possibly be saved without first being taught.

2. Faith:

After teaching comes faith, for it is impossible for one to

believe before one is taught. Paul, in Romans 10:17 said, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* The reason Jesus commanded His apostles to, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15) was so people might have faith. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) are the great central facts of the gospel. But more than being taught and having faith is required to become a member of the church of Christ.

3. Repentance:

Having first been taught and then believing, one must then repent of his sins. One cannot be saved, then repent of his sins. Our Lord said, *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:2). Thus in the language of the Savior, it is repent or perish.

Repentance is not shedding a lot of tears. Repentance is changing the mind from **I want** to **I will**. It is a deep resolve to cease sinning and flee to God. When one truly repents, he will obey God. Repentance is the result of conviction of wrong. See the people on Pentecost. They were convicted of having crucified the Savior. This conviction brought about a change of mind accompanied with godly sorrow and led to obedience (Matthew 21:28-32; Acts 2:33-38; 2 Corinthians 7:20). But teaching, faith, and repentance are not all that is required in becoming a member of the church of Christ. Confession is next in order.

4. Confession:

Confessing the Christ as our Savior is certainly put down in the New Testament as a condition of salvation. *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My*

Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). Christ confessing us as His before God is dependent upon our confessing Him. Again, Paul in Romans 10:9,10 made it very plain that confessing Christ with the mouth is a condition of salvation. *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* How plain, how simple, is confession made a condition of salvation!

When the Ethiopian eunuch asked of the preacher, Philip, *"What hinders me from being baptized?"* Philip replied, *"If you believe with all your heart, you may."* The eunuch replied, *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"* (Acts 8:36,37). This is the confession that is to be made, and not that "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins." One is divine, the other human. Which have you made?

5. Baptism:

Baptism is as much commanded as a condition of salvation as faith, repentance, and confession. Jesus, in commissioning His disciples, said, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved"* (Mark 16:15). This is just too plain for comment. Salvation is placed after baptism, not between faith and baptism. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in answer to the question, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* replied, *"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:36-38).

One does not have a right to expect that God has forgiven him and accepted him into His spiritual family, which is the

church, until he has (1) been taught the word of God on the plan of salvation, (2) believes the word of God, (3) repents of his sins, (4) confesses the Christ as his Savior, and (5) is baptized. All of this is necessary, because it is the teaching of God's word and not the word of men (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Have you done these things? If not, do not delay longer. Your soul is at stake.

Texts Used:

John 6:44,45; Matthew 28:18,19; Romans 1:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 21:28-32; Acts 2:33-38; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 8:36,37; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:36-38.

Lesson 10

The Worship of the Church

We should certainly approach the study of this lesson with reverence and awe. Our Lord said to the woman at the well of Jacob in Samaria, *"God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). Here are two elements that enter into acceptable worship — **spirit** and **truth** — and we want to say just a few words about both and then the **acts** of the worship.

1. In Spirit:

This means that our heart, soul, mind, and spirit must be in the worship. We can't expect God to bless us in the worship if we are chewing gum, looking around, talking and laughing, fumbling with a song book or thinking about worldly things. Unfortunately, too much of this is done. If you expect to be edified in the worship you must put your soul into it. Whatever act of worship is being engaged in, every Christian should have his soul in that act.

2. In truth:

This means that what we do in worship, the acts that we engage in, must be directed by the word of God. In John 17:17 our Lord says, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* The Christian is not to do in worship whatever he may want to do. Nothing is to be practiced in the worship as a part of the worship that is not prescribed by the word of God. Otherwise the worship is vain. In worship, we are to worship God and do what

pleases Him, not ourselves. There is too much worship that is a matter of entertainment, doing those things that please the people. In New Testament times the following acts of worship were engaged in:

a. Studying the scriptures:

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). By "apostles' doctrine" is meant the doctrine of Christ as taught by the apostles. These men were endowed with the Holy Spirit and taught accurately the things of Christ (John 16:7-15). Christians need to know the doctrine of Christ. To neglect the worship is to neglect getting the teaching that they so much need. The more we know about the doctrine of Christ, the more we will love Him and the better we are prepared to serve Him.

b. In fellowship:

This means the giving of our means to the support of the cause of Christ, and every Christian is to engage in this act of worship. *"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). There is a lot in the New Testament on giving and Christians should give freely of their means (2 Corinthians 9:6-10). The gospel is to be preached, church houses to be built, fuel, lights, water, and other items that are necessary. God expects all to do their part. A "tight-wad", selfish Christian cannot go to heaven (Matthew 16:24-30). If you are spending freely for the things of this world and giving but little to the cause of Christ, you need conversion, and that right now.

c. Breaking of bread:

This means the Lord's supper. Our Lord instituted His supper on the night of His betrayal and His people are to observe it on the "first day of the week". *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). Also read Matthew 26:26-30 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. In Hebrews 10:25 we are exhorted, *"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."* Would you go fishing, or to an all-day singing, or grave-yard decoration, or some other worldly place or thing and neglect the Lord's supper? This is just what many people do. May God help them to see that they do not love Him and are not worthy of the name "Christian".

d. Prayers:

How much we all need to pray, not only in our homes, but together! So many have but a thimble full of spirituality! Many hardly know what it is to talk to God. The early Christians lived close to God and they did much praying. Read Acts 4:23-31 and Acts 12:11,12. In our worship we are exhorted, *"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men"* (1 Timothy 2:1). The church of Christ should be a praying church. In the worship every member should be praying along with the one who is wording the prayer so that, at the end, all could say deep down in their hearts, "Amen". But so often many do not know what is being said because their minds are on worldly things. Certainly such is not worship "in spirit".

e. Singing:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren: in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You" (Hebrews 2:12). This is said of Christ. *"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15). *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16). This is New Testament worship, and when such acts are engaged in on the first day of the week God is honored, Christ exalted, and Christians blessed.

To sum up, worship must be (1) in spirit, (2) in truth, (3) studying the Scriptures, (4) fellowship, giving of our means, (5) breaking of bread, the Lord's supper, (6) prayers, and (7) singing.

Texts Used:

John 4:24; John 17:17; Acts 2:42; John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:9-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Matthew 16:24-30; Acts 20:7; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 4:23-25; Acts 12:11,12; 1 Timothy 2:1; Hebrews 2:12; Hebrews 13:15; Colossians 3:16.

Lesson 11

The Mission of the Church

When we talk about the mission of the church, we mean the whole church, all who are members of the church, and not just the preacher, or a few members. All Christians need to learn this lesson. It is too often the case that the work of a congregation is left to just a few and the rest sit on the "stool of do-nothing". We are all in the vineyard to work and if we expect to receive anything after the day's labor we will have to put out or we will be left out (Matthew 20). Maybe all don't understand the mission of the church, so we want to help you if we can. Observe closely our mission:

1. To give light to the world:

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). "You" who? The Christian. That means both you and me — all of us. The church is to give light to the world and this is done by living the principles of the teaching of Christ, reflecting in **our** life the life of the Savior. Certainly this is something that all can do. People are in darkness (Acts 26:18), and it is the Christian's duty to lead them out of darkness into the *"glorious light of the gospel of the Son of God"* (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2. To be the salt of the earth:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Acts 5:13). Salt is

used to preserve animal flesh and to season food. This teaches that the church is to so live as to leaven society. There was not enough salt in Sodom to save it from destruction (Genesis 18:20-23). Worldly church members have lost their saving influence and are good for nothing, in the light of our text, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Have you any salt left?

3. To preach the gospel:

"To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). The "manifold wisdom of God" is Christ and Him crucified, or in other words, the gospel, God's power to save (Romans 1:16). It is the mission of the church to preach the gospel. The church at Antioch was a missionary church, that is, that church sent men out to preach the gospel. Churches today would do well to imitate the Antioch church (Acts 13).

4. To glorify God:

Christ glorified the Father by doing His will. *"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do"* (John 17:4). Certainly, we are not glorifying God if we are not doing His will. Again, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work"* (John 4:34). That is the way for the church to glorify God. The place in which to glorify God is the church. *"To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever"* (Ephesians 3:21). Those not in the church just can't glorify God. God is to be glorified in His appointed institution.

5. To defend the truth:

"But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you

ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Since the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth", which means that the church is to support the truth, the church is also to defend the truth. Jude says that Christians should "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). The early church defended the truth to the death. The church cannot sit idly by and see the truth evilly spoken of, blasphemed, perverted, and do nothing about it. The truth must be defended at all cost.

6. To edify its members:

Here is the work of the elders. They must see that the church is taught the word of God, that the members are trained for usefulness in the church, and that all are taught to "*observe all things whatsoever I (Christ) commanded*" (Matthew 28:20). Let every member of the church understand the mission of the church and then do his or her part to fulfill that mission. Thus the church will be edified and be just the sort of church the Lord would have.

Texts Used:

Matthew 20; Matthew 5:14; Matthew 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 5:13; Genesis 18:20-33; Ephesians 3:10; Romans 1:16; Acts 13; John 17:4; John 4:34; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Timothy 3:15; Jude 3; Matthew 28:20.

Lesson 12

The Eldership of the Church of Christ

Elder Defined:

The word "elder" means literally older, aged, belonging to a more mature time or age, older in contrast with youth or young men. An elder is someone who has lived long enough for the passions of youth to have subsided into sobriety and now looks on the serious side of life.

Young people are not to be put into the eldership, otherwise they are man-made elders, and not God-made elders. The church of Christ must not be turned over to young people to run. The church of Christ today is badly in need of God-made elders, sometimes called bishops.

1. Qualification of Elders:

"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, nor greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and

the snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

(a) "*Desires the office of a bishop*". "*This is a faithful saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.*" A good work because there is no better work than that of shepherding God's people. This is the work of an elder, and if one does not desire this work he is not fit for the eldership regardless of how capable he may be. To have to beg someone to take upon himself this responsibility is sufficient proof that he is not qualified for the eldership.

(b) "*A bishop then must be blameless*" — without blame. But this does not mean that an elder has to be perfect, never without mistakes. Remember that an elder is human the same as the rest of us. Don't expect of him more than God expects of him. But the apostle proceeds to tell just wherein an elder is to be blameless as follows:

(c) "*The husband of one wife.*" Just one living wife at a time is the teaching. A man who has two living wives is living in adultery, and such cannot be an elder in the church of Jesus Christ. Furthermore the statement clearly implies that the man is to be married at the time of his appointment. Remember that Paul is stating the qualifications of an elder at the time of his appointment to the eldership and not what may take place in the life of an elder after his appointment. Hence, after one is appointed to the eldership and his wife should die has nothing to do with the qualifications of his appointment, a fact that is much overlooked by many in discussing the qualifications of an elder.

(d) "*Temperate*". This means watchful, alert, on the job. If an elder does not attend the services of the church, he cannot be a scriptural elder. If he has so much business as to hinder him, or if he is just lazy, indifferent, not on the job to oversee God's peo-

ple, to guide spiritually, to advise, and to support the work of the church, he is not qualified for the job. The church can be hurt badly by those who wear the title "elder" in name only. They would be a hindrance to the cause of Christ instead of being a blessing to it.

(e) "*Sober-minded*". This means that an elder is to be grave, serious minded, well balanced, not affected by passion or prejudice, not quickly swayed by reports coming from just anyone, slow to act, but firm.

(f) "*Of good behavior*". His conduct should be that becoming of an elder, a clean life and fatherly toward those he is shepherding.

(g) "*Hospitable*". An elder should be benevolent, entertaining, invite others to his home and help them along the way of life. In so doing he sets the example to others.

(h) "*Able to teach*". Capable of teaching, the ability to teach. But just because one can get up before a congregation and make a little speech does not mean that someone is "able to teach". "To teach" means to explain, to instruct, and not to recite. Very often men are appointed to the eldership who have absolutely no ability to teach, who were not teaching before their appointment. Just remember that Paul is giving the qualifications of an elder at the time of his appointment, and not that men are to be appointed and afterward see if they have these qualifications.

(i) "*Not given to wine*". An elder will certainly lose his influence if he is known to drink strong liquors.

(j) "*Not violent*". This means that an elder is not to use his fists or is known to get into fusses in the neighborhood or in the church.

(k) "*Not greedy for money*". Not a money lover, stingy, someone who gives but little to the church when he could give much.

(l) "*But gentle*". An elder should be gentle, kind and considerate.

(m) "*Not quarrelsome*". Not one who is quarrelsome, noisy, fussy.

(n) "*Not covetous*". Free from the love of money or anything that would wean him from full discharge of his duty as an elder.

(o) "*One who rules his own house well*". His own family, his wife and children. "*Having his children in submission with all reverence*". His children are to respect and obey him. The order of his home determines his fitness to take care of the church of God.

(p) "*Not a novice*". A novice is a beginner, one just converted. It is a serious mistake to chose new Christians as leaders because they have not had a chance to develop in Godly wisdom.

(q) "*A good testimony among those who are outside*". An elder must be well thought and respected by the community.

We have given these qualifications of an elder as given by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Those given by Paul to Titus in Titus 1:5-9 are the same only stated differently. There is nothing about the qualification of an elder that is not understandable. Timothy and Titus were expected to understand them, and so can we.

2. How to proceed to get elders:

Paul said that he left Titus in "*Crete, that you should set in*

order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I had commanded you" and then gave him the qualifications of elders. With those qualifications in hand, Titus was to find men who would fill the bill. Certainly Titus was there long enough to mix and mingle with the membership to know who were qualified and who were not.

3. Who is to appoint elders?

In Acts 13, the church sent out Paul and Barnabas. On their return the record states that they "*Ordained them elders in every city*" (Acts 14:23). In this case Paul and Barnabas did the ordaining, or appointing. Then Titus was "*left in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting and to ordain elders in every city.*" (Titus 1:5). Paul's instruction to Timothy as to qualifications of elders shows that Timothy, too, appointed elders. Thus we have Paul and Barnabas, Titus and Timothy, appointing elders. These men, filled with special insight through the power of the Holy Spirit, were able to look into the hearts of men and make these appointments. However, today, we have no special power of insight. We must depend on our knowledge of the lives and conduct of the men in our congregations and appoint those men who meet the qualifications of an elder. In this setting, it would be preferable for the congregation itself to consider men for appointment, rather than for the sole authority to rest in the hands of one man — the preacher.

4. What is the form or ceremony in appointing elders?

There is none. On this God has not legislated. Simply announce the names of those who are to be appointed, read the qualifications, have prayer, impress on the ones to be appointed

in the presence of the congregation the responsibility of their work and exhort the congregation to respect them for their work's sake. That's about all.

5. Work of elders:

Paul admonished the elders at Ephesus to *"take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28). This is too plain for comment. Elders are to "oversee" and to see that the congregation respects the will of God. They are to exercise discipline, to exhort, and to keep out false teachers. The success of the congregation, its spiritual welfare, depends in a great measure on the spirituality and faithfulness of its elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).

6. Plurality of elders:

The record says that "they ordained elders" (Acts 14:23), and not "elder". The same in Acts 20:28 in which Paul admonishes the "elders" at Ephesus, and not "elder". A congregation with just one elder is not God's order.

7. The duty of members to elders:

The duty of members towards their elders is found in the following text: *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"* (Hebrews 13:17). Members need to learn that elders are the overseers of God's people and that as such should be held in honor.

8. Elders resigning:

There is nothing in the Bible about an elder resigning.

However, if an elder is not functioning, if he is not faithful, if he is not overseeing the flock, or if his personal life or character is not what it should be, or if his wife is unfaithful, or children disobedient, he has lost his influence as an elder and the church no longer respects him as such. To be an elder in name only is no honor to the church.

Texts Used:

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 13; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1,2.

Lesson 13

What Membership in the Church Means

There are definite Bible reasons why one should be a member of the church of Christ. One should not be a member of the church of Christ just because it is a religious institution, but because of what it means to the soul to be a member of this church. It is our prayer that every Christian who reads this lesson will be strengthened and made to rejoice because of being a member of the church of Christ. To be a member of the church of Christ means:

1. To be a member of the church of which Christ is the head.

"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22,23). *"And He is the head of the body, the church..."* (Colossians 1:18). Certainly, Christ is the head of His church, not just any church, and if I want Christ as my head, I will have to be a member of His church. When people say, "You don't have to be a member of the church to be saved," they mean that you don't have to have Christ as your head to be saved. One cannot have Christ as his head if he is not a member of the church of which Christ is the head. But Christ is the head of His church; and therefore, the reason one should be a member of His church.

2. To be a member of the church of which Christ is the founder.

The church of Christ was not founded by some mere human being, but by Christ Himself. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, *"...on this rock I will build My church..."* The church of Christ was founded and built by Christ Himself. Denominational churches were all founded by men. This is one of the big differences in the church of Christ and denominations. Friend, of which do you prefer to be a member?

3. To be a member of the church of which Christ is the foundation.

After Peter had confessed that Christ was the Son of the living God, Jesus then said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matthew 16:18). Christ Himself is the "rock", the foundation upon which His church is built. On this we are not left to guess, for Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* The Catholics are wrong in contending that Christ built His church on Peter. Now if I want Christ as my foundation, if I want to plant my feet upon His word, if I want Him as my support, I will have to be a member of the church of which He is the foundation, and that church is the church of Christ.

4. To be a member of the church that is purchased with His blood.

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Please note — it is the "church of the Lord" — not

just any church that is purchased with His blood. If I am in the "church of the Lord" I am purchased with His blood; if I am not in His church I am not purchased with His blood. Membership in the church of Christ means something. Yes, it means to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

5. To be a member of God's spiritual family.

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:16,17). These words are addressed to Christians, those who are members of the Lord's church. In Romans 16:16, Paul says, *"The churches of Christ greet you."* Thus to be in the church means to be a member of the spiritual family of God, and to be an *"heir — heir of God, and joint heir with Christ."* If I am not in the church, I am not a heir, and no blessings await me. No wonder then that the church of Christ means something, yea all, to the soul that wants to be saved!

6. To be a citizen of Christ's kingdom.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13). *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"* (Hebrews 12:28). While the kingdoms of the earth are being shaken, and many of them going down, the kingdom of Christ will continue on. Better take refuge in Christ's kingdom! To be a member of the church of Christ means to be a citizen of Christ's kingdom.

To sum up, membership in the church of Christ means to be (1) a member of the church of which Christ is the **head**, and (2) a member of the church of which Christ is the **founder**, and (3) a member of the church of which Christ is the **foundation**, and (4) a member of the church that is **purchased with His blood**, and (5) a member of God's **spiritual family**, and (6) a **citizen** of Christ's kingdom. The church of Christ means something to the soul who wants to be saved. A church that one does not have to be a member of to be saved is a non-essential church. Friend, let me exhort you to be a member of the church of Christ.

Texts Used:

Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:16,17; Romans 16:16; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11.

Lesson 14

Instrumental Music

What Others Say:

Chambers Encyclopedia, Volume VII, page 112, "The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian I, 666. In 757, a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by the Byzantine emperor, Constantine Copronymus, and placed in the church at Compiègne."

McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia, Volume VIII, page 739, "The Greek word Psallo is applied among the Greeks of modern times exclusively to sacred music, which in the Eastern church (Greek Catholics) has never been any other than vocal, instrumental music being unknown in that Church as it was in the primitive church."

Thus it is easily seen that instrumental music was first introduced into the hot-bed of spiritual corruption in the seventh century under Pope Vitalian. Denominational churches have foolishly borrowed this idol from the Roman Catholic church. The church of Christ must stay clear of all such innovations and corruption of the worship as so clearly stated in the New Testament. Lack of space forbids giving you what Adam Clark, the great scholar of the Methodist church, and John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian church, say against the use of instrumental music in church worship. We will now state the principles governing acceptable worship to God.

1. **Worship in Spirit and truth:**

Read John 4:24 and you will find that the two essential ele-

ments of acceptable worship are "Spirit and truth". God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth, so says our Lord and you can't defeat it. The worshipper must be sincere, honest, and conscientious. His heart, soul, mind, and spirit must be in the worship, and he must be governed by the "truth" in the worship. In John 17:17 we read, "*Your word is truth.*"

All should know that the New Testament of which Jesus is the mediator (Hebrews 8:16) is that part of the Scriptures that the Christian is to be governed by. And this being true, the New Testament does not authorize mechanical instruments of music in worship. If one reasons that they are permissible because they were permitted in the Old Testament, then the burning of incense, animal sacrifices, earthen altars, and blood sacrifices of animals are permissible. "*The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" (John 1:17). You will have to find instrumental music in "grace and truth" before it would be Scriptural. Only that which is authorized by Christ through His apostles is acceptable with Him (Matthew 28:20).

2. The Christian walks by faith:

In 2 Corinthians 5:7 we read, "*For we walk by faith, and not by sight.*" It is a pity that all who claim to be Christians can't see this and put it into practice. How do we get faith? "*So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). And Romans 14:23 declares that "*whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.*" It follows then that since we "*walk by faith and not by sight*" that "*faith comes by hearing the word of God*", that "*whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*", and seeing that instrumental music is not in the New Testament, it is a sin to attempt to worship God with such. These principles cannot be defeated. God

does not accept worship which He has not ordained, it matters not how religious and sanctimonious it may appear to be. If you respect the word of God and practice it, you will quit it right now.

3. His divine power gives us all things:

"...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). By turning to Romans 1:16 you will learn that the divine power is the gospel of Christ, God's power unto salvation unto all them that believe. This being true and mechanical instruments of music not being in the gospel, it follows as clearly as the nose on your face that it does not "pertain unto life and godliness." But some say, "They are attractive and an aid in drawing people." Yes, so would canary birds, ice cream and soda pop be attractive and draw some. But get this: *"And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32). If people are not "drawn" by the "lifted up Christ" they are not drawn at all.

4. Do all in the name of Christ:

"Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:16). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" means by His authority. Now just where in the New Testament does Christ authorize mechanical instruments of music in the worship? Christ did not include it and the Christians governed by His spirit will not include it.

5. The spirit that governed the Christ:

In John 8:29, our Lord said to the Jews, *"And He that sent me*

is with Me: the Father has not left Me alone." How did the Son know that the Father was with Him? Here is the secret, same verse: *"for I do always those things that please Him."* How did the Christ know that He always did the things that pleased the Father? Verse 28 gives the answer: *"I do nothing of myself; but as the Father has taught Me, I speak these things."* Ah! friend, there is the secret of our blessed Lord's life! How could I worship the Father with mechanical instruments of music when He has not taught me that it is acceptable? Neither can you. But many presumptuously go right on using that old wooden box, that old idol, caring nothing about what the Lord says. Friend, break away and take your stand with those who are faithful and true to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. God will abundantly bless you in doing that very thing.

6. Vocal music authorized:

"Saying, I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You" (Hebrews 2:12). This is said of Christ. "I will sing praise to You" and not "play praise unto You". Again, *"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15). *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16). This is the kind of music — vocal — commanded by Christ, and the kind that God accepts. The Lord authorizes one — vocal. The other is added by man.

People are heard to say, "Well, I can worship with the instrument or without it." Just how can one worship God with the instrument or without it? Worship is a matter of faith. Where is

the faith for the instrument? In worship we haven't our choice. If God commands the instrument, then we must use it or we are condemned. If God commands singing and leaves the instrument off, then one cannot worship God with it. Is it impossible for some to get this principle?

7. If right in the home — why not in the church?

The argument is often made that if mechanical instruments are right in the home, why not in the church? Answer: Man is the head of his home — Christ is the head of the church. See Ephesians 1:22,23. The Lord says nothing about what sort of food I am to have on my table. He says a lot about what is to be in the church. Cornbread is all right in the home, but wrong on the Lord's table. The church belongs to Christ. He alone has the right to prescribe its worship. *"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for their doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9).

Do you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind? If so you will not knowingly try to worship God with the innovations of man, but will *"ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein"* (Jeremiah 6:16). May God help you to do that very thing.

Texts Used:

John 4:24; John 17:17; Hebrews 8:16; John 1:17; Matthew 28:20; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17; Romans 14:23; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 1:16; John 12:32; Colossians 3:16; John 8:28,29; Hebrews 2:12; Hebrews 13:15; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 1:22,23.

Lesson 15

The Commission

1. What Christ said:

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

"And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16).

"Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46,47).

Thus we have (1) teaching, (2) faith, (3) repentance, (4) baptism, (5) and salvation. That is what Jesus said.

2. What some denominations say:

(1) teaching, (2) faith only, (3) salvation, (4) baptism because you are saved. And thus the denominations promise the people hope where there is no hope, salvation where there is no salvation. Friend, which do you want — what our Lord says or what the denominations say? It is up to you to make the decision.

3. The commission executed: The Pentecostians:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:36-38).

And thus we have (1) faith, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly", (2) "cut to the heart" — convicted of sin, (3) "Men and brethren, what shall we do?", (4) "Repent", (5) "be baptized", (6) "for the remission of sins", (7) "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". The very thing that Christ said to teach and command: faith, repentance, baptism, and then remission of sins. The apostles were true to our Lord's command.

4. What some denominations say: The jailer and his house:

(1) Repent, (2) remission of sins, (3) baptism because you already have remission of sins. In other words, denominations pervert the text and teach that "baptism" is because of remission of sins. If that be true, "repentance" is also because of remission of sins. They are saying that you should repent because you already enjoy the remission of your sins. Now isn't it strange that the masses will accept denominational teaching and flatly spurn the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles! But if denominations taught the truth there wouldn't be any denominations. It is false doctrine upon which denominations are founded and false doctrine that perpetuates them.

"Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? So they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized" (Acts 16:29-33).

Note: *"Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house."* That means that they preached the gospel to him, told the jailer and his house about Christ, and how Christ saves. They preached to him the commandments of Christ. And while we find only faith and baptism mentioned in connection with their conversion, repentance is implied, for Christ said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. Thus we have the very things that are in the commission: faith, repentance, and baptism.

5. What some denominations say:

Denominations say that man is saved by faith only, and go to the jailer and his house for proof of such. They say that Paul just said, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household"*. But we have just shown that the record says that Paul and Silas preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, which means that they preached the gospel to him, and in so doing they preached the commandments of Christ, the things that Christ in the commission said to preach.

If this text is an example of "faith only", then repentance is also excluded, for it is not mentioned. Notice, though, that bap-

tism is mentioned, for the record states that "he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and he was baptized, he and all his household immediately."

Thus the apostles preached the very things our Lord said to preach. They preached about the crucified and risen Christ, called on sinners to believe on Him, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized. *"He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved."*

Texts Used:

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:36-38; Acts 26:29-33.

Lesson 16

Faith and Works

1. What James said:

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:21-26).

(1) "justified by works", (2) "when he had offered his son, Isaac, upon the altar", (3) "faith wrought with his works", (4) "and by works was faith made perfect", (5) "Abraham believed God", (6) "and it was accounted to him for righteousness", (7) "You see then that a man is justified by works". "Faith only" has never saved a soul and never will save a soul. If one's faith is not strong enough to lead someone to obey God, then that person will just have to go out of the world without hope and without God. That is the teaching of James, (8) *"For the body without the spirit is dead"*, (9) *"so faith without works is dead"*. What could be plainer?

Question: When was Abraham's faith "accounted to him for righteousness"? James says, "when he had offered Isaac his son

upon the altar". When Abraham's faith moved him to obey God, to do exactly what God told him to do, to "offer his son Isaac upon the altar" is the very point and place in his faith that brought the blessing that made his "faith perfect" and caused his faith to be accounted to him for righteousness. Thus Abraham's faith was a working, acting, doing faith, and the only sort of faith that will save the soul.

2. What Men Say:

Men say, "It's not so, we are saved by faith only. The very moment one believes, they are saved. Works has nothing to do with one's salvation." Thus we have James, an inspired man, on the one hand, and men on the other. Which will you believe? That is what denominations stand for — a flat-footed perversion of God's word.

3. What Paul said:

"What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:1-3).

Note: Paul says that Abraham was not justified by works, whereas, James says that he was justified by works. Is this a contradiction? We answer, NO. James discusses justification by faith and the works of the gospel, whereas Paul shows that one is justified by faith minus the works of the law, *"because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight"* (Romans 3:20).

Most of the book of Romans was written to show the differ-

ence in the gospel of Christ, which is a system of faith (Romans 16:26), and the works of the law. That is why gospel preachers today do not tell people to keep the decalog, or Ten Commandments. It belongs to the works of the law, and "*by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight.*" The works of the law and the works of the gospel are two different sets of works. By one a man is justified, by the other he is not. That is the difference.

4. Faith and Obedience:

By "faith and obedience" is simply meant faith and works. You can't make anything else out of it. In Romans 5:1 Paul says, "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" In 2 Thessalonians 1:8 the same apostle says that when Jesus comes He will come "*in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Thus in one place Paul says that we are "justified by faith" and in another place says that when Jesus comes He will take "vengeance on them that obey not the gospel," which shows conclusively that faith is one thing and that obedience is another, and that it takes both to save the soul. Hence, faith and works coupled together is God's way of saving the soul.

5: What Jesus says about doing:

"*Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Doing the will of God is certainly a work, and our Lord says that only those who do His will are saved. This will certainly satisfy the hungry soul on this important subject.

6. What some denominations say:

Denominations say that there is nothing for man to do, that if man is to do anything he earns salvation and that cuts out God from getting the credit of saving man. Thus the denominations dispute God on this subject. We would say to those who claim to have faith that, until your faith in God is strong enough to lead you to obey the gospel of Christ, you will have to remain a lost soul; so *"faith apart from works is dead."*

7. The obedience of faith:

In Romans 16:25,26 Paul says that the gospel he preached was to be *"made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."* The faith of the gospel is something that man can obey and must obey to be saved. Man does not have saving faith until he obeys the gospel. To say that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of man, but your faith does not lead you to obey Christ, you will get nowhere in the saving of your soul. *"For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it begins first at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God"* (1 Peter 5:17).

Yes, faith and works, the faith and works of the gospel of Christ. By such man is justified, by such man is saved. Man is not justified by faith without obedience. Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? Are you still obeying the gospel? If so you are a saved soul. If not, you are lost!

Texts Used:

James 2:21-26; Romans 4:1-3; Romans 5:1; Romans 16:25,26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Matthew 7:21; 1 Peter 4:17.

Lesson 17

Repentance

Repentance Defined:

“Repent” — to change one’s mind in regard to past or intended action or conduct — to turn.

“Repentance” — act of repenting, or state of being penitent. Saving repentance is a complete turning from all that is evil to righteousness. Repentance short of turning unto God will not save the soul. To just repent of some wrong you may have done and not turn to God in humble obedience to His word is not the repentance taught in the gospel of Christ.

1. Repentance commanded:

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the king and the queen, all everywhere must repent or be lost. “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).

2. Repentance and remission of sins:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Both repentance and remission of sins are in the name of Christ and there is no remission of sins without repentance. Christ’s authority must be recognized in the act of repentance; that is, one must repent because Christ commands it, or else such repentance will not bring remission of sins.

3. Repent or perish:

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Thus in the language of the Savior, it is *"repent, or perish."* This is just how important repentance is. But the masses love their sins, want to go on in sin, don't want to break away from their sins. They will have to go out of the world without hope and without God. That is what Jesus said.

4. Repentance — the difficult command:

"Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent" (Matthew 11:20). Get a man to see that he is a sinner and that he is lost, and if he truly repents, he will not argue with the Lord about baptism. He will gladly do anything the Lord commands. This leads us to say that all of this disputing with the Lord about baptism not being essential just means that the person has not repented.

5. Godly sorrow works repentance:

Repentance is not godly sorrow. But godly sorrow is produced by the word of God. When one is brought to that sense of his sins that makes him ashamed, that humbles him, that makes him fear God, that sorrow works repentance, brings about repentance, and thus leads one to obey God. When such sorrow is planted in the heart by the word of God, it is "godly sorrow" and leads to repentance.

Paul said of the Corinthians: *"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance lead-*

ing to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:9,10).

6. Examples of repentance:

Jesus said, *"The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here."*

Whatever the men of Nineveh did to repent, Jesus says that it truly was repentance. Turn now to Jonah 3:10 and we read, *"Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it."* Thus the men of Nineveh in repenting, turned. Jesus says that is repentance. Friend, have you repented? Have you turned from your evil way? Have you turned unto God?

7. Fruit of repentance:

A reformation of life, a restitution of all wrong as far as humanly possible, a complete turning around and going in the direction of heaven, *"denying ungodliness and worldly lust, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"* (Titus 2:11) is the fruit of repentance. Is this the kind of life you are now living? If so, you have repented. *"Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance"* (Matthew 3:8).

8. Motives to repentance:

(1) God's love for man. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him,*

should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Does not God's love for you touch your heart? Think, sinner friend, that while you are a sinner, God loves you and wants you saved! That is why He sent His Son here to die for you. Surely you say that you appreciate what God has done for you. Then repent and turn to God.

(2) Fear of the judgment. *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:30,31).

Yes, there is going to be a judgment and all are going to be there. Jesus Christ is going to be the judge, and righteousness will be the standard by which all will be judged. Can you afford to go to the judgment not having obeyed the gospel of Christ? If you have not done this, you should attend to it now and thus save your poor soul. May God help you to do that very thing.

Texts Used:

Acts 17:30,31; Acts 10:34; Luke 24:47; Luke 13:3; Matthew 11:20; 2 Corinthians 7:9,10; Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10; Titus 2:11; Matthew 3:8; John 3:16.

Lesson 18

Baptism — How Performed

Greek Lexicons:

Bloomfield: *Baptiso* — to immerse, or sink anything in water, or other liquid.

Liddell and Scott: *Baptiso* — to dip in or under water.

Thayer: *Baptiso* — to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge.

Other Testimony:

Fisher, George Park, D.D., LL.D.: "The ordinary mode of baptism was by immersion." (History of the Christian Church, page 34.)

Calvin, John, Founder of the Presbyterian Church: "It is evident that the term 'baptize' means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive church." (Institutes, Vol. 3, page 344.)

Wesley, John, Founder of the Methodist Church: In commenting on Romans 6:4, this man says, "Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." (Wesley's Notes on the New Testament.)

MacKnight, James, the great Presbyterian Commentator, in commenting on Romans 6:3 says, "Have been buried under the water."

Smith's Bible Dictionary (Fleming H. Revell Company Edition): "Baptism properly and literally means immersion."

There can be no question about the act of "baptism" being immersion. The scholarship of the world is united on this fact. But thanks be to God, we do not have to know Greek or what others say baptism is. The New Testament makes the meaning of baptism clear by showing what was done by those who were baptized, and thus leaving all without excuse as to just what the act of baptism is. Certainly no one studying the baptism of those in the New Testament would ever get the idea that baptism was anything but immersion. But way back yonder some one thought that sprinkling and pouring was so nice and so convenient that it was put into practice and went "over the top" like a canon ball until today those who teach against it are called narrow-minded. Sprinkling and pouring are not substitutes for immersion, and those who have had a little water sprinkled or poured on them are still out of Christ. They simply haven't obeyed God.

1. **The baptism of Christ:**

How was our Lord baptized? In Matthew 3:13 we read, *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him."* Not only did Jesus come to the Jordan to be baptized, but in Mark 1:9 we read that He was baptized in the Jordan river, all of which would have been unnecessary if water had been sprinkled or poured on Him. And Mark adds, *"And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove"* (Mark 1:10). Certainly our Lord was immersed.

Again we read, *"Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins"* (Matthew 3:5,6). In John 3:23 we read, *"Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and*

were baptized.” These Scriptures and others show that in New Testament times, those who were baptized went to the water, went to much water, went down into the water, and while in the water were baptized, and came up out of the water, all of which means nothing if something other than immersion took place.

2. The baptism of the eunuch:

In Acts 8:36-39 we have the baptism of the eunuch. The record reads: *“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”*

Here we have “coming to the water”, “going down into the water”, and “coming up out of the water”. Reader, what do these Scriptures suggest to your mind? When you were baptized, did you do what the eunuch did? Did you do what our Lord did? Or did the preacher bring a little water and sprinkle or pour it on your head? If you haven’t been immersed you haven’t been baptized, and you are not in the Lord.

3. The baptism of Paul:

Paul after his conversion relates some of the things that were connected with his conversion and salvation. In Acts 22:16 he says that Ananias said to him, *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the*

name of the Lord." Why tell him to arise if something other than immersion was done? But Paul in after years tells exactly how he was baptized. Hear him: *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). Thus Paul, by the use of the pronoun "we" includes himself, and says that when he was baptized, he was buried, and that the Roman brethren, when they were baptized, were buried. Friend, God has made the act of baptism so plain that all are left without excuse. Certainly God has made it plain. Do not let someone lead you astray.

4. Baptism is a burial:

You know what it is to bury a cat, a dog, or a human being. You know that it does not mean to sprinkle a little dirt on them. Then you know what it is to be "buried in baptism". You know that it means to be **immersed**. Are you going to risk your salvation on something less than immersion? You say that all should be Christ-like, that is, do as Christ did. Very well, how was the Christ baptized? You know that He was immersed. Then "go thou and do likewise". *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). *"Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead"* (Colossians 2:12). Sprinkling and pouring for baptism were introduced several centuries after the death of the last apostle. It has no Scriptural foundation. Better to take what the Bible says.

5. Obedience required:

To do what God says to do is to obey God. To do otherwise,

is to obey man. The New Testament teaches that baptism is immersion. Those who are immersed, because the word of God teaches it, obey God. Here is what our Lord says about obeying man: "*But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9). Friend, if you obey man, then look to man for your salvation. Here is what the Bible teaches about obeying Christ: "*Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*" (Hebrews 5:8,9). The question is, which do you want — the teaching of Christ or the "doctrines and commandments of men"? You are the one to decide.

6. Conclusion:

No one immersed ever doubts the scripturalness of his baptism so far as the act itself is concerned. That is because the Scriptures are very plain as to what the act of baptism is, but we have known many to become dissatisfied having done something else. "*Faith comes by hearing the word of God*" (Romans 10:17). Let us hear the word of God on this subject, and then believe it and do it. This is the safe way; nothing else is. The scholarship of the world says baptism is immersion. But most of all, the word of God says so.

Texts Used:

Romans 6:4; Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9,10; Matthew 3:5,6; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-40; Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 15:9; Hebrews 5:8,9; Romans 10: 7.

Lesson 19

The Importance of Baptism

Testimony of Scholars:

Dr. Thomas Armitage, commenting on Acts 2:38 says, "Peter offered them salvation through the blood of Jesus for the sin of shedding it, and urged them to leave the wicked hierarchy, and enter the new kingdom by faith and baptism." (History of the Baptism, page 73.)

Adam Clark, the great Methodist commentator, in commenting on Mark 16:16 says, "'He that 'believeth' — he that credits this gospel as a revelation from God, and is 'baptized' — takes upon him the profession of it, obliging himself to walk according to its precepts, he 'shall be saved' — redeemed from sins here, and brought at last to the 'enjoyment of My eternal glory'." Again, this great commentator, in commenting on "being born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5) says, "Baptism by water, into the Christian faith, was necessary to every Jew and Gentile that entered into the kingdom of the Messiah."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church, in commenting on Acts 22:16, "Be baptized and wash away thy sins", says "Baptism administered to real penitents, is both a means and seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive church bestow this on any, unless than through this means." (Wesley's Notes on the New Testament.)

Thus Dr. Thomas Armitage, the great Baptist Historian, and John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, and Adam Clark, the great Methodist commentator, all make it very plain

that baptism is put down in the New Testament as a condition of salvation. We could give a host of others testifying to the same thing, but we haven't the space to do so.

The connection that baptism has with salvation is made very plain in the Scriptures. Regardless of what man may say on the subject, the question is, what does the Bible say? Rest assured that the hungry soul can know beyond a doubt the truth of God on this and all subjects that pertain "*unto life and godliness*" (2 Peter 1:3).

1. Baptism is commanded by Christ:

After Christ's resurrection He said to His apostles, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 28:18,19). Here we learn that the apostles were to teach and baptize. This being true it follows that those who are taught are commanded to be baptized. In Mark 16:16 we read, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*" Here "baptism" is plainly commanded. Question: Does it make any difference whether or not man obeys the commandments of Christ? In Hebrews 5:8,9 we read, "*Though He were a Son, yet He learned obedience through the things He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.*" Looks like that is plain enough.

2. Baptized — Saved:

Mark 16:16 plainly states that salvation comes after belief and baptism: "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but*

he who does not believe will be condemned". Whether this suits some or not, it is the way the Lord has arranged it. It doesn't matter what men may say to the contrary. This Scripture is too plain to be misunderstood. Man gets salvation only on the Lord's terms. The text does not say, "He that believes is saved, and should be baptized because he is saved." Yet, that is the way some denominational churches preach it. They deny that baptism is a condition of salvation. Which are we to believe, the Lord or denominational churches?

Some try to reason away what the Lord says by supposing that one is on his way to be baptized, and drops dead before being baptized. It seems that many want to go to heaven on suppositions. Well, anyone can suppose. But thanks be to God supposing is not put down as a condition of salvation. Of course, no one knows of such a case, but if he does, that poor soul just died without obeying Christ, and therefore, without the promise of salvation. People need to understand that God saves people on their obedience and not on what they suppose. There is a lot of rank infidelity on the part of many who claim to be Christians.

3. Baptism unto remission of sins:

Acts 2:38 reads, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus unto the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" Here "remission of sins" is placed after both repentance and baptism, and not between repentance and baptism. The text does not read, "Repent, and you will be saved, and then be baptized, because you are saved". No, the word of God does not put it that way. If repentance is unto remission of sins (and there is no "if" about it), then baptism is unto remission of sins, and no amount of logic can make it otherwise. But people are taught that they are first saved, and then

baptized because they are saved. If that is the meaning of the Scriptures, the Bible should be junked, for it means just the opposite of what the Bible says.

4. Baptism puts one into Christ:

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3). Christ's blood was shed in His death. We are "baptized into His death". That is when we come in contact with His blood and not before. Yes, we sing, "There is power in the blood." But the blood is reached when we are "baptized into His death". What does it mean to be "in Christ"? *"In whom we have redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins"* (Ephesians 1:7). This makes it very plain that all who haven't been "baptized into Christ" are out of Him, and therefore yet in their sins. Friend, have you been "baptized into Christ"? If so, you have obtained forgiveness of your past sins. If not, you are still in your sins and lost. Won't you look up a congregation of the church of Christ right now and let them help you to obey Christ?

5. Baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

Baptism is the only act of obedience that puts one into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You do not believe into these names, you do not repent into these names, you do not confess into these names, you do not pray into these names, but you are baptized into them. It, therefore, follows that you will never enter into the blessed fellowship of those names until you are baptized into them. It is a common thing to hear that baptism has nothing to do with the salvation of the soul. That means that the Son of God was wrong, that the name of the

Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, means nothing to the soul. You must despise these doctrines and commandments of men and respect the teaching of our Lord.

6. Baptism saves us:

You have heard preachers say that baptism does not save you. But listen to this inspired preacher, Peter: *"Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:20,21).

Thus an inspired man says, "baptism doth also now save us." What is the picture? The ark with eight precious souls in it was transported by water over into a new world. That is the figure. But what did it prefigure? Answer: Our salvation by baptism. That is what Peter is saying. Just as the old ark with eight souls in it rested upon the bosom of the great deep and was safely carried over into the new world, it prefigured our translation from the "power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). Baptism is the translating act that changes the state of the penitent believer from this world to the church, the kingdom, of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is like "giving birth" is the translating or delivering act that brings the unborn child into this world. If you can understand the one, you can understand the other.

Until a child is delivered it will never see and live in this world. Likewise, one will never see and live in the church or kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ until baptised. Baptism is the

delivering act. May God help the sincere soul to see the truth and beauty of this all important subject.

Texts Used:

Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 2 Peter 1:3; Matthew 28:18,19; Hebrews 5:8,9; Romans 6:3; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 3:20,21; Colossians 1:13; John 3:5.

Lesson 20

How the Holy Spirit Operates in Conversion

We do not know of any Bible subject that is more badly butchered than that of the Holy Spirit. Almost everything conceivable in religion is attributed to the Holy Spirit. People cry aloud for the Holy Spirit to come down and save sinners. They talk more about the Holy Spirit than they do about God and Christ. They pray to God for a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. And if someone seems to get happy and throws a fit in a meeting, they just know that it is the Holy Spirit. No wonder we have infidels!

We believe what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. The question is, how does the Holy Spirit convert? How does He do His work?

1. The theory that the Holy Spirit operates separate and apart from the word of God:

There is not one example of such a theory in all the Bible. Furthermore, if such a theory were true and the Holy Spirit does not operate on every soul individually, then God is a respecter of persons, the very thing that the word of God declares God not to be.

If God sends the Holy Spirit directly upon the sinner, and seeing that all are sinners, and He does not send the Spirit upon all, wouldn't that make God a respecter of persons? If not, just what would it take to make God such? John 3:16 declares "*God*

so loved the world" — that means all the world. Does He send the Holy Spirit on just a part of the world, seeing that He loves the whole world? If you contend that the Holy Spirit operates separately and apart from the word upon the sinner, and seeing that He does not operate upon all sinners, you are saying that God does not love the whole world, and therefore you make God a respecter of persons. People become infidels because they understand the ridiculous and absurd position that religious people take on Bible things, because the infidel knows that such a theory will not harmonize with John 3:16 and many kindred passages.

2. The theory that the Holy Spirit operates only upon those elected from all eternity:

That is, that God way back yonder, before He laid the foundations of the earth, elected certain men and angels to eternal life, and determined others to eternal damnation, and that the number of each is so fixed that it can't be increased or decreased and that God in His own good time sends the Holy Spirit upon those elected. This is just another man-made theory and does no honor to God. It puts smut on His character and makes Him a respecter of persons.

According to the theory, man is not a free moral being. He does not have the power of choice. He was not made in the image of God, and therefore is not responsible in any way for his salvation or damnation. He was either elected to be saved or lost before he was ever born. But the Scriptures represent man as a responsible being, that he has the power of choice, that he can act and must act if he is to be saved.

Peter said to those to whom he preached on Pentecost, "*Save yourselves from this crooked generation*" (Acts 2:40). Why tell

them to save themselves if elected to salvation from all eternity, or if damned from all eternity? They could not change matters! The heathen jailer said, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" (Acts 16:30). This poor fellow didn't think that he was saved from the beginning! Furthermore, he knew that he could do something, and he did not ask the apostle to have the Holy Spirit to come directly down upon him. The apostle did not ask God to send the Holy Spirit down upon him. Paul just told the jailer what to do and he did it. What a contrast in Paul, a New Testament preacher, and many so-called preachers today!

3. The Bible teaching that the Holy Spirit operates, convicts, by or through the agency of the word — and that preached by human beings:

In this way the Holy Spirit teaches, convicts, reproves, and converts. This is not only Scriptural but common sense. The other is foolishness. If the Holy Spirit does its works separate and apart from the word of God, there is no use in having the Bible. 1 Peter 1:12 says that they "*preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.*" God sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles and they opened their mouths and preached what the Holy Spirit said to preach, and in that way the Holy Spirit reproved, convicted, converted. Yes, through the preached word, and that by man.

4. Some examples of the operation of the Holy Spirit:

In Acts 7:31, Stephen said, "*You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*" How were they resisting the Holy

Spirit? By resisting what the Holy Spirit was speaking through Stephen, and not the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word. So you see that when you resist the word of God, go contrary to its teaching, you are resisting the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit gave the word.

In the same way Stephen said that their fathers resisted the Holy Spirit. Now go to Nehemiah 9:30 and get an example of their fathers resisting the Holy Spirit: *"Yet for many years You had patience with them, and testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands."* God testified against them, but He did it by the Holy Spirit through the prophets, and not separate and apart from the word. Again, in 2 Samuel 23:2 David says, *"And the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue."* David was a prophet and God, by His Spirit, spoke through him. Too plain to be misunderstood!

5. The Holy Spirit operated on sinners on Pentecost — but how?

Answer: Through the preached word. The Holy Spirit came unto the apostles as Jesus had promised them (Acts 1:4,5; John 16:7-15), and they preached the gospel unto the people. The people heard, were convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and cried out, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* The answer given was, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

This is the way the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, preached salvation. This is the way the Holy Spirit operated upon the sinner, and not separate and apart from the word of God.

Keep in mind that the word of God was given by the Holy Spirit and when the word of God is believed and obeyed, the Holy Spirit is obeyed. All that anyone knows about heaven, hell, or the way of salvation is what he reads in the word of God. Beyond that, he knows nothing about these things.

Texts Used:

Acts 10:34,35; John 3:16; Acts 2:40; Acts 16:30; 1 Peter 1:12; Acts 7:51; Nehemiah 9:30; Acts 1:4,5; John 16:7-15.

Lesson 21

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

There is a lot said in the New Testament about the Holy Spirit. For instance, the operation of the Spirit in conversion, the indwelling of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, and the baptism of the Spirit. It is the latter phase of the subject that we are discussing in this lesson.

1. Baptism — it's meaning:

The word "baptise" means to dip, to plunge, to submerge, to cover up, to be overwhelmed. Therefore, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be overwhelmed in the Spirit, to be completely under the Spirit's influence. Baptism never signifies a little bit of a thing, such as a few drops of water, or a little bit of the Spirit.

In Matthew 30:22 Jesus, speaking of His suffering which was soon to be accomplished on the cross, said to certain of His disciples, "*Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am to be baptized with?*" Now does anyone think for a moment that Christ was just sprinkled in suffering on the cross, that there was just a little here and a little there? No, Christ was baptized, overwhelmed in suffering. So baptism of the Holy Spirit means to be overwhelmed, immersed in the Holy Spirit.

2. Christ, not man is the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism:

In Matthew 3:11 John, in speaking of Christ, said, "*He shall*

baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." The apostles could not baptize in the Holy Spirit; they could baptize in water. Therefore, the baptism of the great commission is water baptism, or rather, baptism in water. For baptism never did take place out of the water. Our Lord was baptized "in Jordan" (Mark 1:9), and not on the banks of the Jordan. Since Jesus was the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism, if people are baptized in the Holy Spirit today, our Lord must do the baptizing. But none are baptized in the Holy Spirit today, for the purpose of that baptism has been accomplished, and that long ago as we shall see before we close this lesson.

3. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise, and not a command:

Man can obey a command, but he cannot obey a promise. Here we again see that the baptism of the great commission was a command, and not Holy Spirit baptism. Jesus says, "*He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). This is a command. Hence, water baptism. This is said because many today contend that it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that counts, and that baptism in water is nothing. Many ridicule the command of Christ to the penitent believer to be baptized.

4. The promise of baptism in the Holy Spirit was to the apostles:

In Acts 1:1-5 we read, "*The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Spirit had given commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and*

speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which said He, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

Here Luke states that Christ was talking to His apostles, and that He promised to baptize them in the Holy Spirit. Unless we can find somewhere in the New Testament that Christ promised to baptize all believers in the Holy Spirit, none should claim such a baptism. Where is the promise? It can't be found.

5. Why were the apostles baptized in the Holy Spirit?

Turn to John 16:7-15 and you will get the answer. There you will see that Christ is talking to His apostles and promising them the Holy Spirit and telling them what the Holy Spirit through them would do. The Holy Spirit was to "*reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*" and to "*guide them into all the truth*". Does the preacher today need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to "*guide them into all the truth*"? No, because we have all the truth. We have the New Testament, a thing the apostles did not have. What then does the preacher or anyone need the baptism of the Holy Spirit for? Some say, "To save us." Just show one case where it is said that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to save the one thus baptized. It can't be found.

6. When were the apostles baptized in the Holy Spirit?

The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of

Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of the Christ. Now go to Acts 1:4,5 and there you will learn that Christ commanded the apostles to not *"depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, you heard of me. For John truly baptized in water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."* Here Christ left the apostles, ascended up to heaven, and ten days later, sent the Holy Spirit upon them.

In Acts 2:1-4, *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the apostles) were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

The apostles are now at the right place, the Holy Spirit has come upon them; they are baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes possession of their minds (for it was their mind that was baptized), and they are now ready to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. Many tongues (languages) are before them, and the Holy Spirit enables the apostles to reach the people in "their own tongues". Then follows the sermon. About three thousand were convicted and obeyed the gospel that day. Many years after that memorable day Peter said, *"To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were administering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into."*

And thus in the study of this subject we have learned (1) that

to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be immersed in the Holy Spirit, and (2) that Christ was the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism, and (3) that Holy Spirit baptism was a promise, and not a command, and (4) that the promise of the Holy Spirit baptism was to the apostles, and (5) that the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and to guide the apostles into all the truth, and (6) that Pentecost was the day that the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit for the purpose of giving them the words and power to remember and preach the gospel and enabling them to speak the languages of the earth. Since we have the gospel as preached by them in the form of the New Testament, it follows that no one today needs to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Texts Used:

Matthew 20:22; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:9; Mark 16:16; Acts 1:1-5; John 16:7-15; Acts 1:4,5; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Peter 1:12.

Lesson 22

Cornelius and the Holy Spirit

Why did the Holy Spirit fall on Cornelius? Why was Cornelius baptized in the Holy Spirit? We know that he was baptized in the Holy Spirit, for Peter in Acts 11:15 says, "*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*" And we know that the Holy Spirit fell on Peter, and the other apostles in a baptismal measure.

1. What others say:

Many contend that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order to be saved. In fact, they contend that it is the "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), and that if you are not baptized in the Holy Spirit, you are lost. Now were Cornelius and his house baptized in the Holy Spirit in order to be saved? If so, where is the text that so teaches? We affirm that the text can't be found. What then was the purpose of their being baptized with the Holy Spirit? That is the issue and we are happy to state that the New Testament tells exactly why. On this we don't have to guess. But first we will show the purpose for which the Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius. And where we have removed the "nots" it will be an easy matter to find out the "why".

(a) The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to give him faith.

In Romans 10:14-17 we learn that "*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" That is the way people get faith and not by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Well, is faith necessary to salvation? Yes, "*For without faith, it is impossible to*

please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Then, since "faith comes by hearing the word of God", and "how can they hear without a preacher?" you can see the necessity of Peter going to the home of Cornelius and preaching the gospel to him.

(b) The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to sanctify him.

In John 17:17 our Lord said, "*Sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth.*" In the Bible the word "sanctify" means to separate, to set apart unto divine service or religious use. Then if Cornelius is to be separated from the world, set apart unto divine things, holy living, he must be sanctified. But the word of God is the means by which one is sanctified. It was necessary for Peter to preach the gospel to Cornelius. Not one time does the New Testament teach that being baptized in the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of sanctifying the one thus baptized. But sanctification is necessary to salvation. And thus we see that this is accomplished by the word of God and not by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

(c) The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to convert him.

In Romans 1:16 we read, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.*" The gospel of Christ, then, is the converting power, so says the Apostle Paul. But the gospel must be preached by human beings, for our Lord said, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). It was necessary for Peter to go to the home of Cornelius and preach the gospel to him. Cornelius can't be saved without conversion, and the gospel is the converting power.

(d) The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to give him light.

And yet one can't be saved without spiritual light. The gospel is that light. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we read, "*Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*" Cornelius was in need of spiritual light, and if such light is to come to him some of God's servants will have to take it to him. That is exactly what Peter did. When the gospel came to Cornelius, light came to him. He saw, he obeyed. Many are now in darkness, not because they haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but because the gospel hasn't been preached to them.

(e) The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to save him.

In Acts 11:14 we read, "*Who shall tell you words, whereby you and all your house shall be saved.*" That is what the angel told Cornelius that Peter would do for him. Cornelius was an unsaved man before Peter went and preached the gospel to him. So Cornelius was to "*hear words whereby you and all your house shall be saved*" and not by being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Thus we have seen that faith, sanctification, conversion, light — all necessary to salvation — are said to be accomplished by the word of God, and not by being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

2. Two miracles take place in connection with Cornelius' salvation:

There were two miracles taking place in connection with Cornelius' salvation: one on the preacher, Peter, and the other on Cornelius. If one of these miracles, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is necessary today, so is the other. Why push one of the miracles and leave unpushed the other?

Does the preacher today need to go upon the house-top to

pray about the sixth hour and while up there get very hungry and while the folks downstairs are making ready the preacher falls in a trance and while in a trance he sees heaven opened and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein are all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air and a voice comes to him, saving, "Rise, preacher, kill and eat" **in order to convince him that the gospel is for every creature?** Well, that is exactly why such a miracle was wrought on Peter. He and the other apostles had withheld the gospel from the Gentiles, and now God had to work a miracle upon the preacher to teach him that He is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, he that fears God and works righteousness, is accepted of Him (Acts 10).

Someone says, "No, such a miracle is not necessary; we all understand that the gospel is for all." Likewise, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not necessary, for it, too, was a miracle, wrought upon the Gentiles; not to save them, but **to convince the six Jews that Peter took with him that the gospel is for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.** That was the purpose of the Holy Spirit falling on Cornelius and his house. These six Jews did not witness the miracle wrought on Peter, and so far as the record shows, there is no intimation that they knew that such a miracle had been wrought on Peter. So when they reach the home of Cornelius, God has to work another miracle to convince them. He sent the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his house, they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues, and magnified God. *"And they of the circumcision (the six Jews) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

And thus the six Jews that were present had to be convinced

that the Gentiles had a right to salvation. This was the purpose of the Holy Spirit being poured out on Cornelius and his house. Peter, in Acts 15:8 affirms this very thing. He says, *"And God who knows the hearts, bare them witness (the Gentiles), giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did to us."* So Peter, an inspired man, says that the purpose of the Holy Spirit falling on Cornelius and his house was to "bear them witness". The record says nothing about their being baptized in the Holy Spirit to save them. In fact, Peter says in Acts 10:47,48, *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."* Cornelius and his house still had to be baptized in water.

Just as the first miracle that was wrought on the preacher, Peter, is not necessary to salvation today, so the second miracle, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not necessary to salvation today. God always has a purpose in doing things. Find out the purpose and you have the truth on the subject.

Texts Used:

Ephesians 4:5; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; John 17:17; Romans 1:16; Mark 16:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 11:14; Acts 15:8.

Lesson 23

Sanctification

Sanctification Defined:

The word "sanctify" means to separate, to set apart to religious use or holy purpose. There is nothing of a mysterious nature connected with the word. In the Old Testament even animals and inanimate things were sanctified. "*Sanctify unto Me the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast*" (Exodus 13:2). Both the altar and the tabernacle in the wilderness were sanctified (Exodus 29:37-44). The temple that Solomon built was sanctified. This shows that these things were to be devoted to religious use, and therefore set apart for that purpose. In the New Testament the word means the same.

1. Christ sanctified Himself:

"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:20). Christ "sanctified" Himself — kept Himself separated from the world that He might devote Himself to holy things, and in so doing, be able to sanctify others. Had He done otherwise, He could not be the Savior of man. It was necessary for Christ to keep Himself sanctified, separated from the world in order to be the Savior of man.

2. Christians are to sanctify God:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Peter 3:15). This means that Christians are to enthrone God in their hearts, to

acknowledge Him as Lord and ruler, and to allow Him to rule their hearts. Thus the Christian can sanctify God, that is, set God apart in his heart. But the fearful thing is, so many who claim to be Christians are not doing this. Instead of sanctifying God in their hearts they are sanctifying the devil in their hearts, allowing the devil to rule their lives. Certainly if you claim to be a Christian and are worldly, God is not in your heart.

3. The means by which we are sanctified:

a. The truth. *"Sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth"* (John 17:17). Here we learn that it is by the truth, the word of God, that we are sanctified. Nothing mysterious about this. Just hear the truth, believe the truth, and do the truth, and you are sanctified. And if you keep hearing, believing, and doing the truth, you will stay sanctified.

b. By faith. *"To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me"* (Acts 26:18). "Faith" then is also a means of sanctification, that is, setting one apart, separating one from the world unto holy living. Are you beginning now to see just what sanctification is, and the means by which it is accomplished?

c. By the will, or covenant. *"Then He said, Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* (Hebrews 10:9,10). By the New Testament of which Christ is the mediator (Hebrews 8:6) and the offering or sacrifice of His body, we are sanctified. We are sanctified by that of which Christ is the author.

d. By the blood. *"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate"* (Hebrews 13:12). Without the blood of Christ, none can be sanctified, or saved. Christ shed His blood in order that man might be saved, and those who obey Him become the sanctified, the saved. That is all that is meant by being "sanctified by His blood".

e. By the "washing of water by the word." *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"* (Ephesians 5:25,26). Yes, even water baptism is a means of sanctification. One is sanctified, not by just some one thing, but by all that God says on the subject.

f. By the Holy Spirit. *"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 15:16). 2 Thessalonians 2:13 teaches the same thing. This simply means that the Holy Spirit is the means or agency by which the word of God is preached; that is, the Holy Spirit brought the word of God to the apostles and through them, who preached it and wrote it, and when men obey the word of God they are obeying the Holy Spirit, and in that way they are said to be "sanctified by the Holy Spirit". The Holy Spirit does not operate independently of the word to sanctify any one.

Thus we have mentioned six things by which we are said to be sanctified. To pick out any one thing and stress it to the exclusion of the other things is to pervert the word of God, and the anathemas of high heaven rest on him who does it (Galatians 1:8).

4. Not sanctified by the baptism of Holy Spirit:

Nowhere does the New Testament teach that we are sanctified by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), but they had been sanctified, separated, set apart to the service of Christ long before Pentecost. Their baptism in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was for the purpose of bringing the gospel of Christ directly from heaven to them so that they could preach the gospel in the languages of the people (1 Peter 1:12).

5. Sanctification is not sinlessness:

Some seem to think that sanctification is sinlessness; that is, a sanctified person can't sin. The Bible does not teach that. The Bible plainly teaches just the contrary. Paul addressed the "*church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*" (1 Corinthians 1:2). Yet, these same people were guilty of about all the sins one can think of — strife, carnality, division, envy, profaning the Lord's supper, lawsuits, and incest. The two letters — 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians — were written for the purpose of pointing out these sins and correcting them.

Sanctificationists are guilty of sin every time they say they can't sin and don't sin. Maybe they have no Bible conception of sin; to them sin is not sin. John said, "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" That is what an inspired apostle says of one who says he can't sin and doesn't sin. John says, "he deceives himself and the truth is not in him", to which we say, Amen. But John also says, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:8,9). This shows conclusively that the "sanctified" do sin. And remember, John used the pro-

noun "we" including himself, and he was an apostle and had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Sanctificationists claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of eradicating, knocking out even the very thought of sin. John, the apostle, didn't think so. Just the difference in an apostle and some uninspired men.

Texts Used:

Exodus 13:2; Exodus 29:37-44; 2 Chronicles 7:16; John 17:20; 1 Peter 3:15; John 17:17; Acts 26:18; Hebrews 10:29; Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 13:12; Ephesians 5:25,26; Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; John 16:7-15; 1 Peter 1:12; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 John 1:8,9.

Lesson 24

Falling From Grace

Grace Defined:

“Grace” generally means favor. Related to man’s salvation, it means the unmerited favor of God in saving man. Man does not merit salvation, he does not earn salvation. It is by God’s grace, God’s loving kindness, that man is even privileged to be saved. That is what is meant by “salvation by grace”.

Before you can fall from grace, you must first be **in** grace. You must first be a child of God, having been born again; born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3-5), and now enjoying the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Now the question is: Can you fall from grace? Can you act in such a way, or become so unfaithful as to incur the disfavor of God and finally be lost? We answer, Yes, such is the teaching of God’s word, and the following texts prove beyond a doubt that this is true.

1. The vine and the branches:

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you

can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:1-6).

The above is a lesson on fruit-bearing. Christ makes it very plain that in order for the branch to bear fruit, it must abide in the vine. He says that if the branch does not bear fruit, it is taken away and burned. He says that He is the vine and His disciples are the branches, and *"if a man does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered."* What could be plainer?

2. Live after the flesh:

"For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

To "live after the flesh" means to do the things of the flesh, to be governed by the flesh. Paul makes it plain that such shall die, not physical death, but spiritual death. And please remember that the epistles were written to Christians to teach them how to live so as to be saved eternally.

3. Paul's own case:

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Thus Paul knew that it was possible for a child of God to be lost. That is why he would labor to keep from being lost.

4. Take heed lest ye fall:

"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

But we answer: Why take heed if it is impossible to fall? It is certain that the doctrine that a child of God can't fall did not come from heaven, but from men.

5. Do these things — never fall:

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).

Just what does an admonition of this kind mean if it is not possible for a child of God to fall? Christians need to heed what the Bible says on this subject.

6. Depart from the faith:

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1).

"Depart from the faith." One could not depart from that which he was not first in. This teaches that some who were "in the faith" would "depart from the faith". If this isn't falling from grace, we would like to know just what is!

7. Turned aside after Satan:

"For some are already turned aside after Satan" (1 Timothy 5:15).

According to the doctrine of some, a child of God may turn aside after Satan and still be in grace! This is what false doctrine leads to.

8. The Galatians:

"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

"Estranged from Christ" — "fallen from grace" — that is the way inspiration puts it, and all because the Galatians were trying to mix the law with the gospel. That is conclusive. The Scriptures not only teach that one can and may fall from grace, but says that some of the Galatians did fall from grace.

What some say:

Some say that if you are once a child of God, you are always a child of God, that if you are once saved, you are always saved. They say that a child of God may sin, may backslide, may depart from the faith, but God won't let that one die in sin. We answer that if that be true (which it is not), all it takes for someone to live on this earth forever in a body of flesh and bone is to just keep on sinning, for as long as they sin, God won't let them die. How ridiculous!

Texts Used:

John 3:3-5; John 15:1-6; Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Peter 1:10; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:15; Galatians 5:4.

Lesson 25

Is the Alien Sinner Saved by Prayer?

Alien Sinner:

One not in covenant relation with the Lord — one who knows not God in the forgiveness of past sins — one who has not been “born of water and of the Spirit”, and therefore not in the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Is such a one saved by prayer? We answer: positively, NO. And this we hope to show to the unprejudiced reader before the close of this lesson.

1. Prayer is not a part of the great commission:

In the great commission that Christ gave to His apostles after His resurrection, and which commission looks forward to the salvation of the alien (all are aliens who haven't obeyed the gospel of Christ), prayer is not so much as mentioned. Faith, repentance, and baptism are clearly commanded by our Lord as the conditions of pardon to the alien sinner. Hear Him: *“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be condemned”* (Mark 16:15,16).

In this text, salvation is promised on the condition of belief and baptism. Now where is prayer? Not so much as mentioned. Then why tell the alien to “pray it out with the Lord”? Luke's account of the commission is as follows: *“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all*

the nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:48). And thus we have faith, repentance, and baptism, but not one word about prayer. Then why tell the alien to pray when Christ has not commanded it?

2. The commission executed:

The second chapter of Acts is the commission executed. The apostles were now endowed with the Holy Spirit and were preaching Christ and telling sinners what to do to be saved. Sinners having been convicted, cried out, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" If prayer is a condition of pardon to the alien, this was the time to tell aliens to pray. But the Holy Spirit through Peter said, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (verse 38). Not one word about "mourner's bench", or "fall right down before your radio and pray the Lord to forgive you and He will do so". Peter said nothing about prayer because prayer is not in God's plan of salvation to the alien sinner.

3. You can't substitute prayer for obedience:

This is the great big error that denominational churches make. Sinners are told to pray it out with the Lord and to expect pardon in prayer. The word of God does not teach this. To tell sinners to expect salvation where God has not promised salvation is to lead souls astray. Prayer cannot be substituted for obedience. Hear our Lord: "*Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21). Thus our Lord says that prayer without of obedience gets us nowhere. Better tell the poor sinner to obey the gospel and trust God for His promise.

4. The case of Saul:

Some may try to take refuge in the case of Saul. Some say, "Wasn't Saul a praying man from the time he saw the Lord until he reached Damascus, and didn't the Lord pardon him because of his praying?" Not by any means. There is nothing on record to show that the Lord told him to pray, and when Ananias reached him, he said, "*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). The statement to "be baptized and wash away your sins" clearly shows that he was still in his sins, and to get rid of his sins he was told to "arise and be baptized", exactly what Christ said in the commission: "*He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.*" Here is where salvation is promised to the alien and not before. You just can't take prayer and ignore obedience.

5. The case of Cornelius:

"*Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God*" (Acts 10:4). But one says, "There is your case!" Not one word about God saying you are pardoned. Just the opposite. God said, "*Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodges with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell you what you ought to do.*" What did the preacher, Peter, tell him to do? Whatever Peter told him, that is what he ought to do and without which he could not be saved. "*Then answered Peter; Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*" (Acts 10:47,48). Exactly what Christ said, "*He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.*" Oh, that we could get preachers today that would preach the truth! Tell the poor sinner what to do to be saved, just what the apostles and evangelists in New Testament times told them to do!

6. The blind man states the truth:

"Now we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31). This is a general principle. One must possess two essential qualities before God will hear his prayer: (1) be a worshipper of God, and (2) do His will. This hardly needs comment. If an alien sinner thinks that God will hear his prayer but he is not a worshipper of God and does not do God's will, he is just deceived. And this fits right in with what our Lord says, *"Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). Prayer is not taught in the New Testament as a condition of pardon to the alien sinner, neither does God pardon the alien in prayer.

7. A misapplied text:

The Pharisee and the publican went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee exalted himself, thanked God that he was not "as other men are" and said that he "fasted twice in the week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed". But the publican, *"standing afar off, would not lift so much as his head unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner"*. And Jesus says that the publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee.

Because "sinner" is found in this text many conclude that God hears the prayers of alien sinners. But this "sinner" was not an alien sinner. This publican was a Jew and in covenant relation with the Lord by virtue of being of the seed of Abraham. There is a vast difference in an alien sinner and one in the church who may sin. God does hear the prayers of his erring children, but an

alien, not in covenant relation with the Lord, must first obey the gospel of Christ. Then God will hear his prayers.

Sinner friend, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Have you repented of your sins? Have you confessed with your mouth Jesus as Lord? If so, why do you wait? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Look up the church of Christ right now and they will assist you in your obedience to the Lord.

Texts Used:

John 3:5; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:14; Acts 2:36-38; Matthew 7:21; Acts 22:16; Acts 10:1-6; Acts 47:48; John 9:31; Luke 18:10-14.

Lesson 26

What All Should Know And Do

1. **Jesus Christ is the Savior of man:**

All should know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of man and that apart from Him there is no salvation. Jesus Himself said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes unto the Father but by Me*" (John 14:6). Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:5,6 says, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave His life a ransom for all, to be testified in due season.*" It is a pity that all do not know and believe this truth. The Jews and others are trying to reach heaven apart from Christ, but He says it cannot be done.

Many seem to think that just because a man is good, charitable, and lives what they call a clean life, that is all that is necessary. If that be true, it was not necessary that our Lord die. But people don't go to heaven on their goodness. Cornelius was a good man, but he had to hear and believe the gospel to be saved. So do all others.

2. **To be in Christ is to be in His church:**

All should know that to be in Christ is to be in His church, and if you are not in His church, you are not in Him. The church is the body of Christ and He is the head of the body, the church (Ephesians 1:22,23). Therefore, if you are not in His church, you do not have Christ as your head. Paul speaks of the "*churches of Judea which were in Christ*" (Galatians 1:22). With this knowledge of Christ and His church, people should stop talking about

salvation being out of the church. You might as well say that salvation is out of Christ. Christ and the church are so related that to be in one is to be in the other. So to be in Christ is to be in the church, and to be in the church, is to be in Christ.

3. We are baptized into Christ:

All should know that to get into Christ you have to be baptized into Him. Romans 6:3 says, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

The Scriptures teach that we were baptized into Christ. Again, *"For you are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Galatians 3:26,27). It follows then that if you haven't been baptized into Christ, you are not in Him, and not being in Him, you are lost. With this knowledge of Christ and baptism, people should stop talking about baptism being non-essential.

4. The church of Christ is the only church authorized by Christ:

All should know that the New Testament church, the church that you read about in the New Testament, namely, the church of Christ, is the only church authorized by Christ. Christ Himself said, *"Upon this rock I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18), and the Holy Spirit through Paul says, *"the churches of Christ salute you"* (Romans 16:16).

10:32). Christ's confessing us before God depends on whether we confess Him. *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Romans 10:9,10). Yes, Jesus must be confessed. If you are ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of you.

10. Be baptized:

All should know that having believed in the Christ, and repenting of their sins, and confessing the name of Jesus, they should be baptized. *"He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16), so said our Lord. None have the promise of salvation until they have been baptized. *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38). Attend to all that Christ and the apostles teach on salvation and not just what may suit you.

After having done the above, you should give special attention to 2 Peter 1:5-11 and Revelation 2:10 and other texts of like nature. *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). And then learn to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Texts Used:

John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5,6; Acts 10; Ephesians 1:22,23; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26,27; Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 3:10; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16; John

8:24; Mark 16:16; Romans 10:17; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30;
Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 1:5-11;
Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:15.

